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Arne Maynard's favourite cut flowers

Choosing the most vibrant verbascums

Designer Sarah Price on

How to plant beautiful pots

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editor's letter

I've recently started work on my new garden and have piles of magazine cuttings (most of them, unsurprisingly, from GARDENS ILLUSTRATED) and photocopied pictures of plants and design details to inspire me. I'm extremely lucky as I get to see more gardens than most people and as a consequence my 'mood board' of ideas is pretty extensive. Looking through the clippings, many of which are 10-20 years old, it's evident how slowly garden fashions change compared to so many other areas of design. Of course change can be a good thing, but I'm a great believer in looking back before moving things on. This issue we feature six stunning gardens, all of which have an enduring appeal, from Stone House Cottage in Worcestershire with its rich planting and brick follies (page 32) to the perfectly ordered potager of Dreamers' Cottage in Oxfordshire (page 48). Arne Maynard inspires us with his insights into cutting gardens (page 96) and for those with more modestly sized gardens, turn to page 42 for designer Sarah Price's lovely planting ideas for containers. I've already printed out numerous images from this issue to add to my collection and I hope you find plenty of inspiration too.

Juliet

Inpsiration for a sustainable garden at Dreamers' Cottage, page 48.

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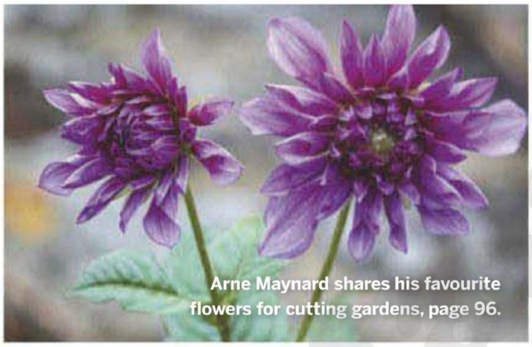

Arne Maynard shares his favourite flowers for cutting gardens, page 96.

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BRITT WILLOUGHBY-DYER; JASON INGRAM

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JULY 2012

COVER IMAGE

The delightful walled garden at Stone House Cottage. Photograph by Jason Ingram. **See feature on page 32.**

on the cover

SUMMER GARDENS July is perhaps the most colourful month in the garden, so in this issue we celebrate flowers in full bloom. Our beautiful gardens on pages **32, 48, 66, 74, 78** and **84** are packed with inspiring planting combinations for a colourful display

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- Join us for a GARDENS ILLUSTRATED reader day at Great Dixter on 12 November – page 17
- Subscribe today and save 25%. Each issue will cost just £2.79, saving £1.20 on every magazine* – see page 30
- Visit Bergamo in Italy for the cultural gathering 'Meeting of the Landscape and Garden' sponsored by GARDENS ILLUSTRATED – see page 100

* Offer applies to UK Direct Debit customers only.

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ABC July-Dec 2011
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contributors

ANNE JENNINGS

A garden and landscape designer and author of a number of books, Anne was for many years horticultural advisor to the Garden Museum – where she first heard about the charity Roots and Shoots. She interviews its director on page 64.

"Talking to Linda, I was aware that this unique project would simply not exist without her drive and commitment."

CAROLINE BECK

A writer and radio producer, Caroline went to Northumbria in the 1980s and, charmed by its wide skies and long horizons, made it her home and inspiration for writing. On page 74 she visits Trygill Burn Cottage, a small garden with a big view near Hadrian's Wall.

"Every inch of this garden has been thoughtfully constructed and lovingly planted – one man's 30-year labour of love."

ROISIN BECK-TAYLOR

RAY MAIN

Ray trained as an architectural photographer but now shoots worldwide interiors, gardens and travel for editorial and commercial clients. He lives between the UK and Southern India – one of his other great passions. He photographed Trygill Burn Cottage (page 74).

"I loved the enthusiasm that Albert had for his garden; it made my job very easy and was a pleasure to shoot."

KIRSTY FERGUSSON

Kirsty spends her time between France and Cornwall and has been exploring and writing about French gardens for the past 20 years. She enjoys leading garden tours in France and she visits a beautiful garden in Brittany on page 84.

"I discovered the difference between symmetry and the art of balance at Crech ar Pape."

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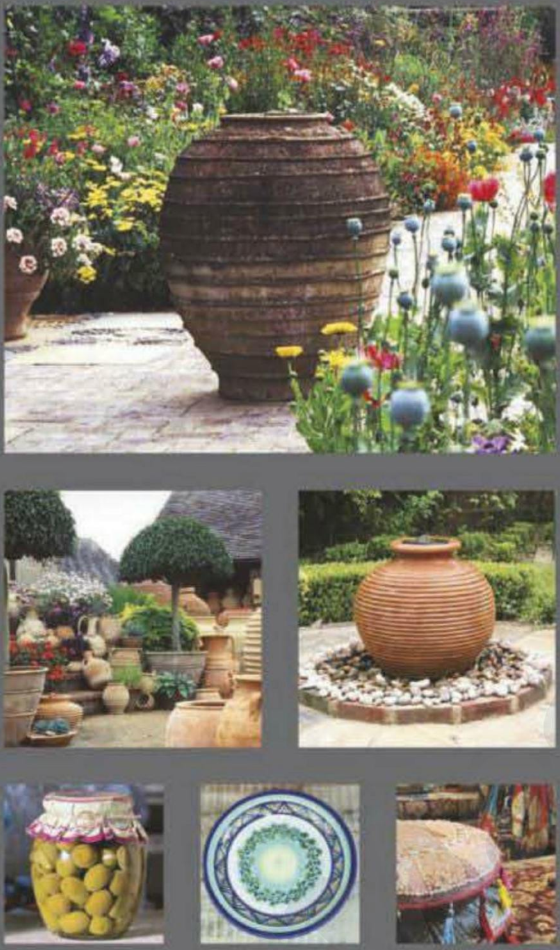

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letters

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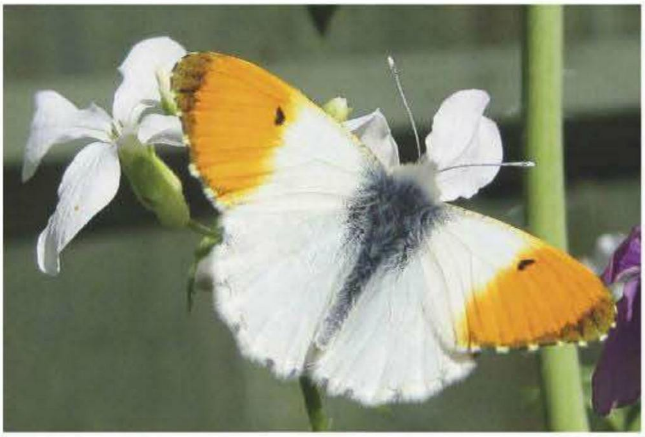
Star letter

Free flower seeds attract wildlife

I thought you might be interested in this photo of an orange tip butterfly. It is feeding on white-flowered honesty that I grew with seed given away on the cover of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED in May 2011.

Simon Beavis, by email



Editor responds: *Look out for our free seeds* in the August and September issues of* GARDENS ILLUSTRATED – Digitalis purpurea *'Sutton's Apricot' and* Larkspur *'Dark Blue'. Sow them this autumn and you'll have an insect banquet in your garden next summer. (* UK sales only)*

Reader responds

American amusement

I found myself smiling gently as I read the book reviews in the February and March issues and encountered repeated references to the books having been written for American audiences. I trust I may be forgiven a certain amusement as the reviewers commented on the need to 'savour from afar' the vision of visiting hummingbirds, bromeliads and succulents on balcony gardens, shared their frustration at varieties not available in the UK and mentioned the terminology differences present in writing geared toward those of us on this side of the pond. As a long-time reader of the magazine I can relate to the sense of being on the outside looking in. Just for once, I'm on the inside, chuckling quietly.

Pria Graves, California USA

Reader responds

Gardens in the USA

As a USA subscriber, for many years I have made suggestions that an effort be made to include occasional articles of special interest to readers in America. At long last you have fulfilled my request with your features on gardens in Nantucket (January) and Sakonnet (May). Thank you for these wonderful articles. Please continue in this direction.

Joan H Marks, USA

Editor responds: If you live outside the UK, don't forget that you can now get digital issues of* GARDENS ILLUSTRATED *magazine for the iPad (please turn to page 103 for details).

Reader's tip

Take care when painting

My neighbour decided to respray her fence, undertaking it while I was on holiday so I wouldn't be affected by the smell. On my return I was dismayed to find all of the perennials in the beds against our dividing fence had died. The paint had come through the gaps and knot holes, coating the plants in lethal liquid. My neighbour was very embarrassed and admitted she should have covered the area first. It will take a lot of money and effort to replant but at least our friendship, if not the plants, survived.

Mrs C Joseph, Tiverton

WRITE TO US & WIN

The star letter wins a pair of Tobisho secateurs, worth £62. These award-winning Japanese pruners are hand-forged out of high-quality steel. For details visit www.niwaki.com

TALKING POINT

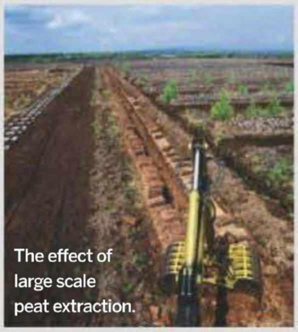
Scientist and environmentalist Dr Mark Avery says using peat in gardens is irresponsible

Ditch the peat

Much of the debate in the gardening world over the use of peat is about whether alternatives work as well, better or worse than peat as a growing medium.

As far as I'm concerned, this discussion is almost totally irrelevant – using peat damages the environment where it is extracted and its use adds to climate change gases. So it's just wrong unless there is an overriding need to use it.

If our lives, or our full bellies, depended on using peat then there would be something to weigh in the balance, but it's just about growing pretty flowers and there are plenty of pretty flowers that don't need peat. Making your garden prettier at the price of a pretty planet isn't a very responsible thing to do. Ditch peat and move on.



The effect of large scale peat extraction.

Dr Mark Avery writes a blog about environmental issues at www.markavery.info/blog/

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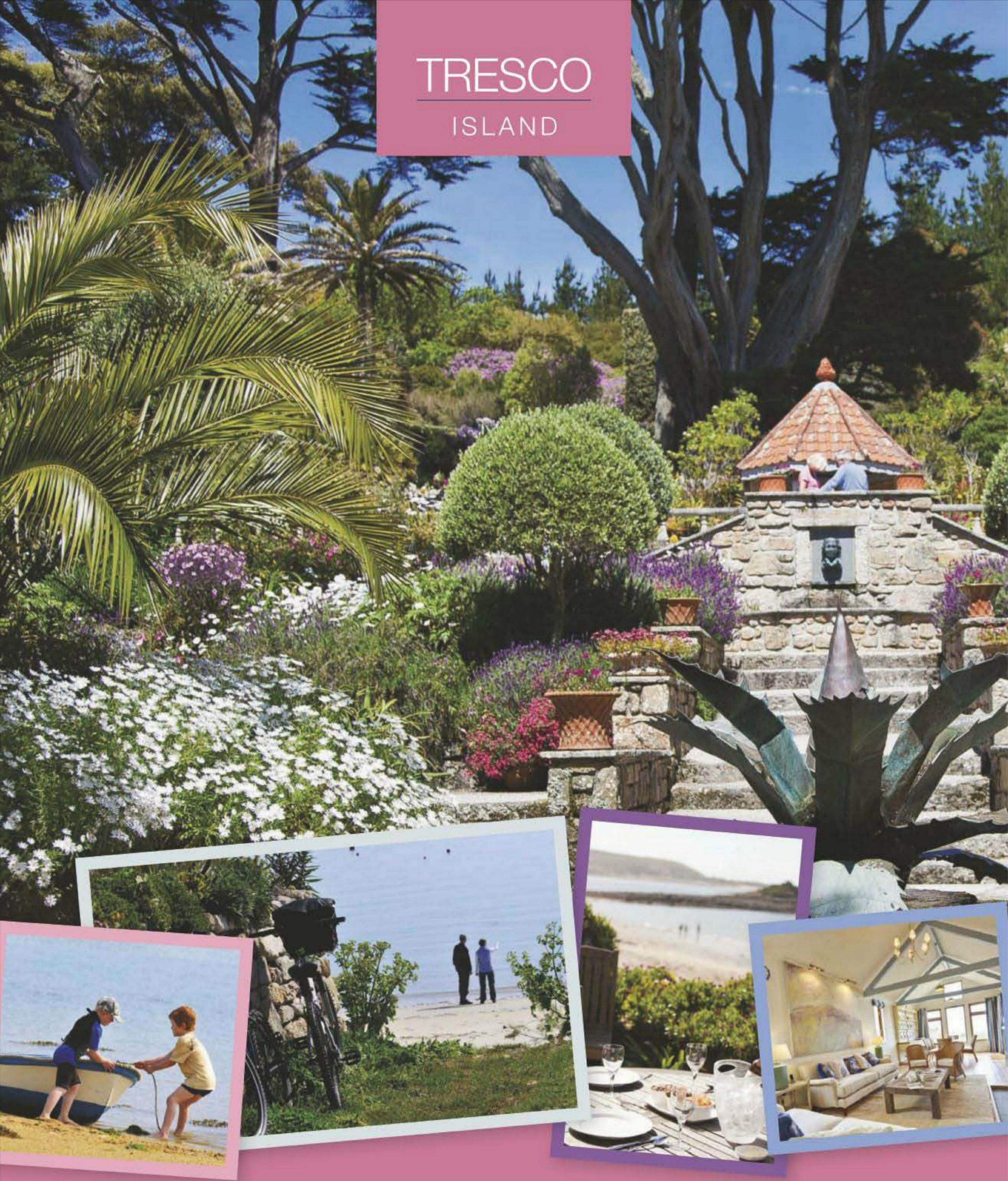
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Dig in

Garden news, Nurseryman's favourites, Shopping & Gardener's notes

NEWS COMPILED BY SORREL EVERTON

EXHIBITION

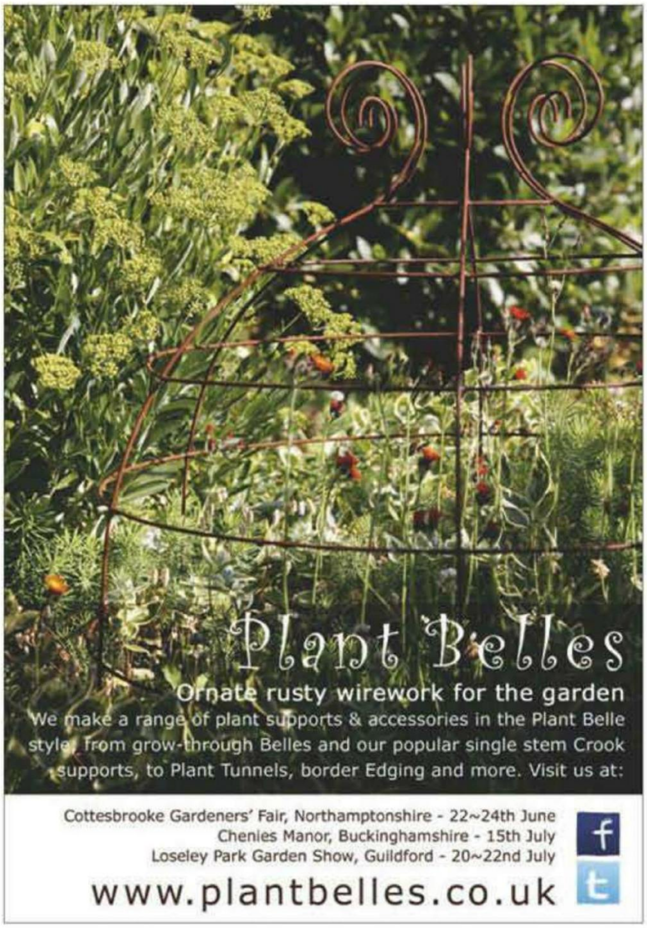
Healing power of plants

The restorative benefits of gardening are being increasingly recognised particularly for those facing challenges in their lives, such as prisoners, asylum seekers, returning soldiers and those with learning disabilities. In addition there is a wider recognition of how transforming blank public spaces into vibrant 'gardens' can benefit urban communities. In celebration of this movement *The New Urban Green*, a photographic exhibition at The National Wildflower Centre in Liverpool with images by Jane Sebire and text by garden writer Caroline Beck, captures some visionary and enthusiastic examples – be they prison gardens, community allotments, or roadside drifts of flowers.

The New Urban Green, 22 June to 28 September. National Wildflower Centre, Court Hey Park, Roby Road, Knowsley, Liverpool L16 3NA. Tel 0151 738 1913, www.nwc.org.uk

A housing estate in Sheffield is brought to life by a meadow rich in colourful flowers, while (above) school children enjoy a lesson outdoors and a shared allotment brings residents together.

JANE SEBIRE



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DESIGN

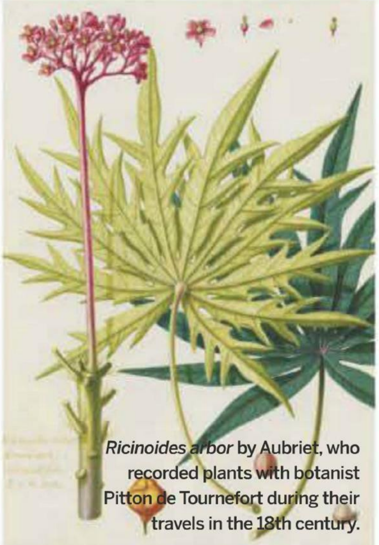
Garden antiques

Antique garden features are a great way to set off your planting. For his gold-winning Chelsea garden this year (right), Cleve West sourced a 250-year-old limestone well-head, stone finials and wrought iron gates to provide focal points. For reclaimed and antique items including urns, statuary, flagstones and furniture you could try:

Architectural Heritage. Tel 01386 584414, www.architectural-heritage.co.uk;

Lichen Garden Antiques (who supplied Cleve West). Tel 01242 609551, www.lichengardenantiques.com;

Summers Place Auctions. Tel 01403 331331, www.summersplaceauctions.com



Ricinoides arbor by Aubriet, who recorded plants with botanist Pitton de Tournefort during their travels in the 18th century.

EXHIBITION

Intrepid plant seekers

Gardening's genteel image belies its adventurous development when dare-devil collectors travelled the remoter parts of the world to discover new plants. You can learn about these historic characters in *The Plant Seekers* exhibition at the Garden Museum. With artefacts and images from the Royal Horticultural Society's archive at the Lindley Library, it aims to show the influence plant collectors have had on our understanding of medicine, science and the environment, as well as our garden favourites. 17 July to 21 October. The Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB. Tel 020 7401 8865, www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

NEW PLANT

Elegant 'Miss Farrow'

If you were taken by the appearance of pinks in many of this year's RHS Chelsea show gardens you might be interested to look out for *Dianthus carthusianorum* 'Miss Farrow'. A chance seedling found by nursery Darasina, this dianthus retains the elegant look of the species but has taller flowering stems of up to 90cm, more greeny glaucous foliage and flowers in the palest pink. It works particularly well in more naturalistic planting schemes. Available while stocks last from RHS Wisley and Hyde Hall plant centres or contact Darasina for details on 01245 248688.

Indulge in the scent and myriad colour of sweet peas at their peak at Forde Abbey's Sweet Pea Sensation fortnight. The garden, a former Cistercian monastery, has been planted with over 60 varieties, growing throughout the garden and highlighting different features.

1–15 July. Forde Abbey, Chard, Somerset TA20 4LU. www.fordeabbey.co.uk

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NOSEY PARKER

We ask inquisitive questions to gardening people

Joy Larkcom

Garden writer and influential vegetable and salad grower who describes herself as having an 'experimental streak'

How did you first become involved with plants? I grew up in the country in a house with a garden. Plants and gardening were as much part of my life as the furniture in the house.

What training have you had? A degree in horticulture, but before that I did a year's practical work in a walled garden, which taught me a huge amount about traditional gardening practices.

What one salad crop should we all grow? No one crop. Try everything, from purslanes to chicories to salad potatoes. Above all, grow what YOU like.

What's your approach to pests and diseases in the vegetable garden? Prevention is better than cure. I try to be vigilant and nip problems in the bud, and being an organic gardener grow plants 'hard' to increase their natural resistance. But organic gardens, of course, suit slugs. That's another story.

What gardening tool would you never be without? My small Chinese hand hoe, made from an old saw blade, so it is a jagged mini rake on one side and a smooth hoe on the other. I use it to make shallow drills for all my cut and come again sowings.

Are you more excited by new or heritage varieties? I have an open mind. Some old varieties are intriguing; some new ones have invaluable pest or disease resistance.

What books are on your bedside table? I've never been able to read in bed but books in the loo include a photography manual, *The Essential James Joyce*, *Empires of the Word* by Nicholas Ostler (an intriguing book on language) and Beth Chatto's lovely *Garden Notebook*.

Who would you most like to have dinner with? Sadly these are all now in the past, but I would love to have **Jane Grigson**, who I never met, Christopher Lloyd, and my dad. I'm sure that combination would result in lively, far-ranging conversation, and if the first two had anything to do with it, lovely food.

Not a lot of people know this about me... but I would love to change my biological clock, so I would **get up early**, go outside with my camera while the world is asleep and catch the magic of dawn... instead of only springing to life at the end of the day.

• Joy Larkcom's latest book *Just Vegetating: A Memoir* is a blend of writings spanning 40 years, woven together with reminiscences of her years travelling the globe and experimenting at home, to encourage British gardeners to grow a more exciting range of crops to eat. (Published by Frances Lincoln, £18.99). Joy will be talking about her book at the Galway Garden Festival on 14 July. www.galwaygardenfestival.com

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Diary

• **RHS Flower Shows**
Hampton Court Palace, Surrey 3–8 July.
Tatton Park, Cheshire, 18–22 July.
For full details and to book tickets call 0844 338 7506, www.rhs.org.uk

• **Summer propagation** Hands-on day course on **how to increase your plant stock** by division, root cuttings, soft and hardwood cuttings, seed collection and treatments. 15 July, 9am–5pm, £118. West Dean, Near Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ. Tel 0844 499 4408, www.westdean.org.uk/college

• **Port Eliot Flower Show** is part of **the Port Eliot Festival** offering competition classes (including scarecrows, below) and talks by Anna Pavord and Val Bourne. 19–22 July. Day or weekend tickets available. Port Eliot, St Germans, Cornwall PL12 5ND. Tel 01503 232783, www.porteliotfestival.com

• **Sussex Prairies open garden** Enjoy **an evening visit, to include refreshments,** a glass of wine and guided tour by owners Paul and Pauline McBride, in aid of the Mary How Trust for Cancer Prevention. 20 July, 6.30pm, £35. Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9AT. Tel 01798 877641, www.maryhowtrust.org

• **Book now** A few places remain on the GARDENS ILLUSTRATED **tour to Venice and the Veneto** to discover the region's rich history and fine gardens. 4–8 September, £2,289. Details on 01341 241717, www.boxwoodtours.com

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There's a string of classic Norwegian destinations to enjoy, highlights of which are sure to be Tromsø and Alta, where fairytale views surround you, with rugged, snow-capped mountain scenery, wooden churches and reindeer pastures. You may be tempted to discover Tromsø's history of hunters and explorers in the city's many museums, the Iceberg-shaped Arctic Cathedral or the Northern Lights Planetarium show. And if that's not adventurous enough for you, there are dog-sledding Shore Tours in Alta, and you can meet the indigenous Sami people, or you might choose to visit the Ice Bar – perhaps the most unusual bar you'll ever visit!

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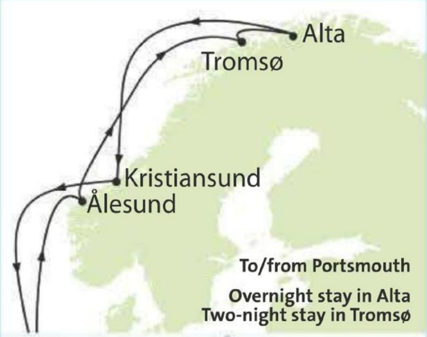

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Succession planting at Great Dixter

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Held in the magnificent timber-framed Great Hall, the day begins with an illustrated talk in the morning. After lunch you'll be given a guided a tour round the different areas of the garden, which will reveal just how good they continue to look late in the season.

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*Calls to this number from a BT landline will cost no more than 5p per minute. Calls from mobiles and other providers may vary. For more details about the day itself call Great Dixter on 01797 252878 or go to www.greatdixter.co.uk/events.htm

DATE

12 November 2012

HELD AT

Great Dixter, near Hastings
in East Sussex

PROGRAMME

9.45am Arrival and coffee

10am Welcome and talk by Fergus Garrett on 'Succession Planting'

12.45pm Lunch with champagne from Taittinger

1.45pm Garden tours

4.30pm Tea in the nursery

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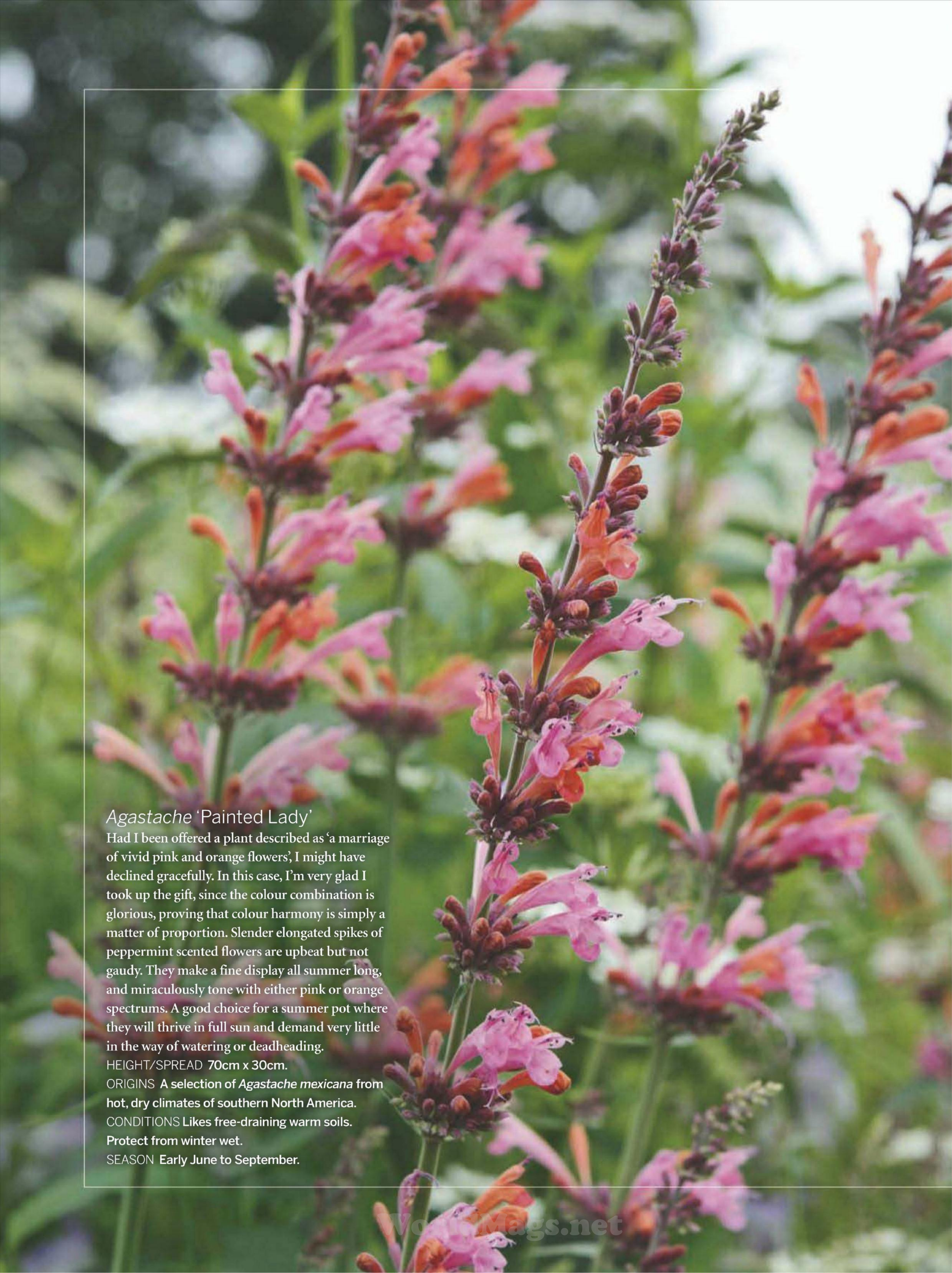


Agastache 'Painted Lady'

Had I been offered a plant described as 'a marriage of vivid pink and orange flowers', I might have declined gracefully. In this case, I'm very glad I took up the gift, since the colour combination is glorious, proving that colour harmony is simply a matter of proportion. Slender elongated spikes of peppermint scented flowers are upbeat but not gaudy. They make a fine display all summer long, and miraculously tone with either pink or orange spectrums. A good choice for a summer pot where they will thrive in full sun and demand very little in the way of watering or deadheading.

HEIGHT/SPREAD **70cm x 30cm.**

ORIGINS **A selection of *Agastache mexicana* from hot, dry climates of southern North America.**

CONDITIONS **Likes free-draining warm soils. Protect from winter wet.**

SEASON **Early June to September.**

July plants

Nine colourful flowers to enjoy as your summer border finally fills out

WORDS **CHRIS MARCHANT** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

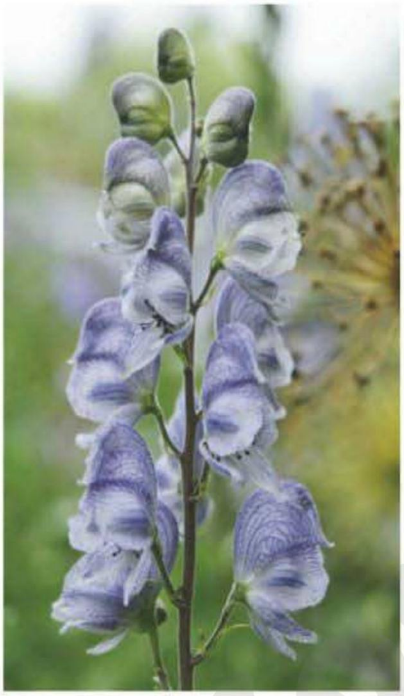
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

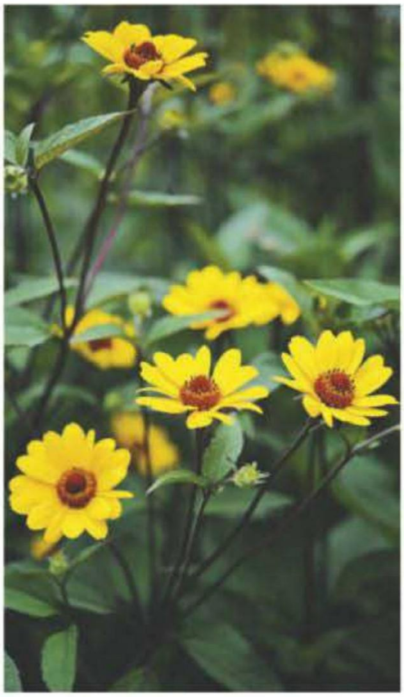
Chris Marchant is co-owner of Orchard Dene Nurseries in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, a wholesale grower specialising in hardy herbaceous plants

Aconitum 'Stainless Steel'

The steely grey-blue flowers have a faint ghostly quality in the low light of early evening. The beautiful dense spikes also make a fine cut flower prized by florists. In borders at home, we plant them to emerge between clumps of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' where the silver variegated grass effectively hides their untidy lower foliage – a common trait of aconitums. *Aconitum* contains toxins which can be absorbed through skin so prolonged exposure could be harmful. Wear gardening gloves to handle plants and flowers.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 100cm x 35cm.
ORIGINS From a Dutch introduction of hybrid origin.
CONDITIONS Fertile, moisture-retentive soil in sun or light shade.
SEASON June to July.





Heliopsis helianthoides var. *scabra* 'Summer Nights'

This plant's name aptly conjures up its dramatic contrast of golden flowers and burgundy stems. When first seen in the perennial trials gardens at Hermannshof in Germany, we made a note to add this to our nursery's palette. Plants tend to grow rather tall, and early season pruning makes little impression. We resolved the problem by constructing hazel-twig frameworks through which the plants strain upwards, yet stay invisibly supported. Deadheading will prolong the flowering display.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 175cm x 50cm.
ORIGINS Heliopsis are native to open prairies and scrubs of the USA and Mexico.
CONDITIONS Most fertile garden loams that have moisture retention.
SEASON June to September.

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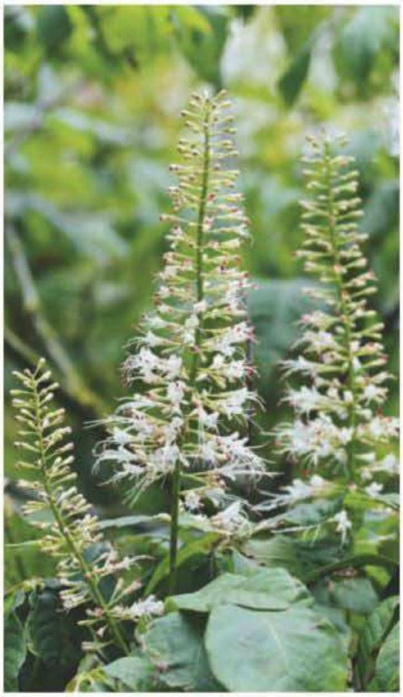


Aesculus parviflora

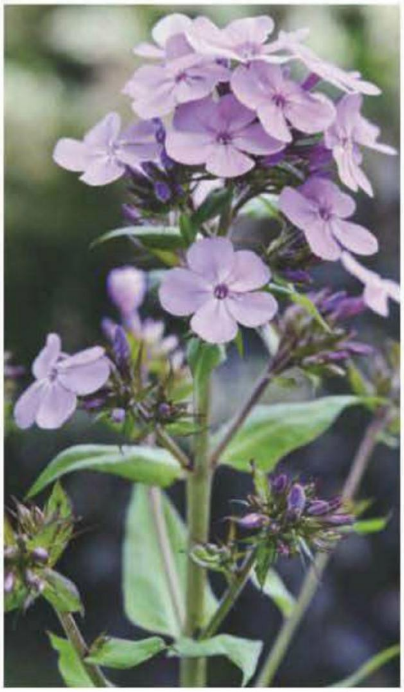
A medium to large shrub with a suckering habit that makes ultimate size indications difficult. For that reason, it is perhaps best suited as a specimen in an open grass area where its invasive tendencies can be curtailed by mowing (although it grows as a large shrub, unlike most *Aesculus* which are grown into full standard trees). In early summer, branches are perched with an abundance of slender upright flower panicles. Peering into the throat of each flower reveals protuberant red anthers and pretty pink filaments. Juvenile foliage is attractively bronzed, later maturing to mid green before finally achieving an attractive autumnal yellow.

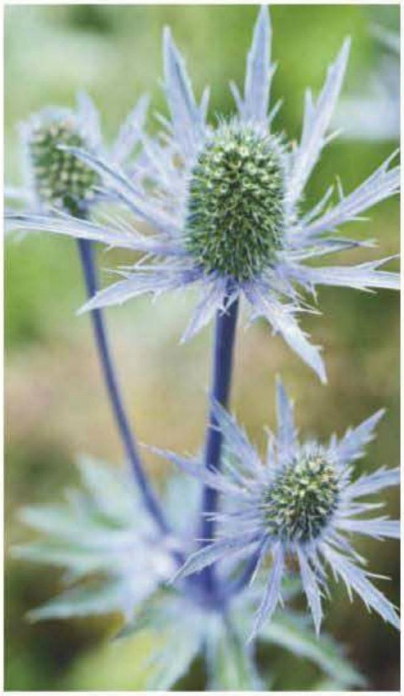
HEIGHT/SPREAD Up to 3m x 3m.
ORIGINS North America.
CONDITIONS Fertile, moisture-retentive soil.
SEASON July to August.

Phlox paniculata 'Reddish Hesperis'

Summer wouldn't be the same without the classic peppery sweet smell of *Phlox paniculata*. There are dozens of good forms and colours from which to choose, but I encourage you to try this one. 'Reddish Hesperis' is tall in stature, but with finer elegant flower heads comprising lavender-pink blooms, each with a central flash of white. Their smaller scale is more easily blended with other plants in a border while their resistance to mildew earns them another star point.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 100cm-120cm.
ORIGINS Species native to Eastern USA.
CONDITIONS Free-draining loamy soils with good organic content.
SEASON July to August.





Eryngium amethystinum

This plant steals in on the scene about now. Having quietly grown up through adjacent foliage almost unnoticed, it ripens in the sunlight to a magnificent blue and demands attention. Each flower resembles an intricate Elizabethan ruff, a veritable pollen magnet to bees and butterflies. The stiff and spiny structure is defensive, while ensuring the plant needs no artificial corsetry to stand. Best kept in lean soils to curb ultimate height and to aid their vertical stability.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 60cm x 30cm.
ORIGINS From Italy, Sicily and the Balkans.
CONDITIONS Well-drained loam from mildly alkaline to acidic.
SEASON Best colour from June to August, though the structure endures longer.

Places to visit

Chris Marchant names some of her favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best.

To see massed herbaceous perennials in creative arrangements, visit the pleasure gardens at **Trentham**, Staffordshire, which have been revived with new funding and a strong new design team – Piet Oudolf, Tom Stuart-Smith and Dominic Cole. Gardens include formal Italian, new perennial, a wildflower meadow and woodlands. There is also a garden centre and a cafe. Trentham Gardens, Stone Road, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8AX. Tel 01782 646646, www.trenthamgardens.co.uk

Trentham Gardens in Staffordshire.

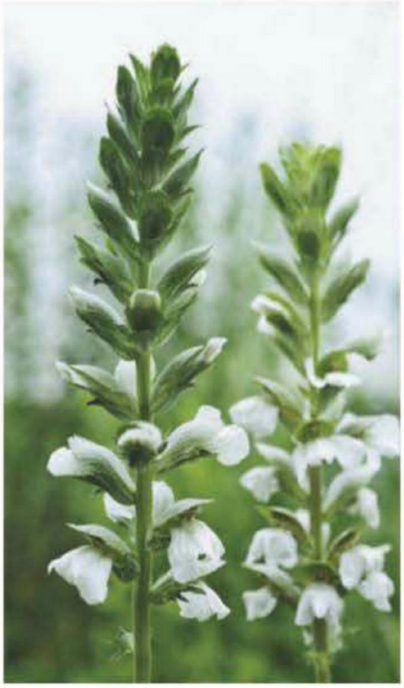
CLIVE NICHOLS/GAP

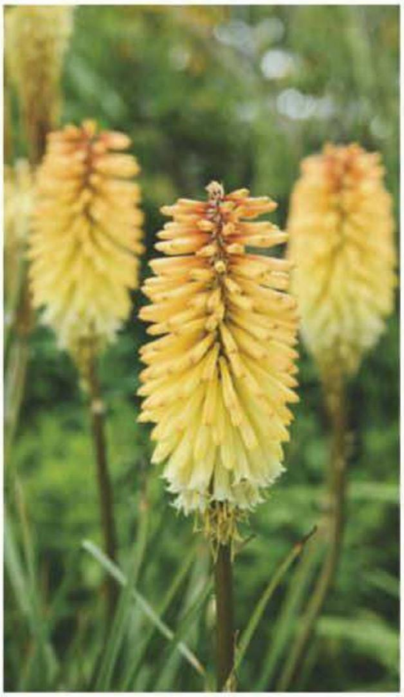
Contemporary planting on a smaller scale can be seen at **Lady Farm** near Bristol in 12 acres of contrasting garden areas. Each has a

Acanthus mollis (Latifolius Group) 'Rue Ledan'

There is a classic elegance to the *Acanthus*, its scrolling foliage a feature detail on early Corinthian columns. This form has excellent vigour and rigidity, sporting fine turgid flower spikes of ghostly white. Stems stand for many weeks without staking, and can often endure late into autumn frosts to provide the garden with winter structure and valuable bird food. A reliable mainstay in a prominent north-facing border where dignified green architecture is required.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 100cm-120cm x 60cm.
ORIGINS Species native to Europe. This form originated in a garden in Northern France.
CONDITIONS Most well-drained garden loam, benefiting from an early spring mulch of leaf mould.
SEASON July to October.





Kniphofia 'Tawny King'

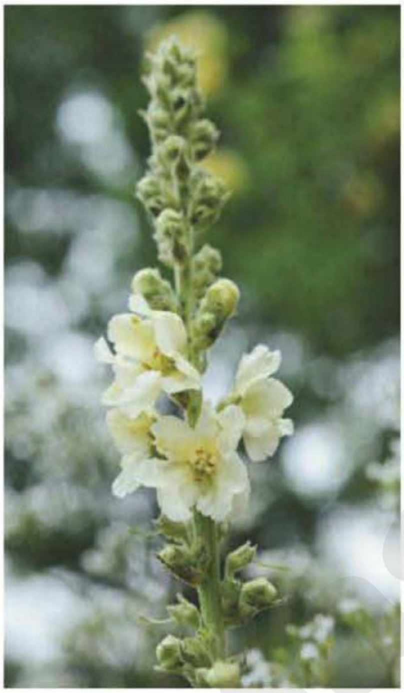
The drama of kniphofia flowers is fleeting, so choose one with an impressive display. Flower spikes of 'Tawny King' are a brilliant graduation of light orange to gold, fading slowly to creamy buff. Flowers are plentiful, provided the crowns are not overshadowed by neighbouring plants. Teamed with the deep blue spikes of *Nepeta grandiflora* they speak of sunny days and scorching temperatures – even if the British summer is sometimes rather slow to oblige.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 90cm x 40cm.
ORIGINS Species originate mainly in the mountains and upland grasslands of South Africa.
CONDITIONS Deep, fertile soil in full sun, benefiting from spring and autumn mulch in order to retain moisture.
SEASON June to July.

Verbascum 'Spica'

The biennial verbascums are invaluable for their rapid introduction of grand scale to juvenile borders. This soft ivory is easily worked into any colour scheme, but I particularly like it among tall blue salvias. Rosettes of giant felted green leaves will perform stoic weed suppression. Since the seeds last for many years in the soil, take care to remove some before ripening, or you will quickly have a verbascum forest. The caterpillars of the mullein moth *(Cucullia verbasci)* can be a problem; pick off or spray to control their ravages.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 2-3m x 50cm.
ORIGINS Native to eastern Europe and Turkey.
CONDITIONS Most well-drained garden loams, including heavy clay.
SEASON June to July.



strong emphasis on plant communities. A steppe garden was created from a difficult mound of subsoil from an old tennis court. A prairie garden looks magnificent from July to December with tall grasses, *Eupatorium* and *Helenium*. Lady Farm, Chelwood, Bristol BS39 4NN. This private garden is open certain days from July to October – phone the owner Judy Pearce on 01761 490770 for details and to arrange a visit. www.ladyfarm.co.uk

The Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden is a ten-acre sculpture gallery but with the character of a private garden. Exhibits are displayed within the extensive wooded and watery grounds of this Surrey house and gallery. Works are for sale, and commissions are undertaken, under the guidance of the owners Hannah Peschar and landscape designer Anthony Paul. Each spring opens with a major new exhibition. Open May to the end of October. Black and White Cottage, Standon Lane, Ockley, Surrey RH5 5QR. Tel 01306 627269, www.hannahpescharsculpture.com

MARCUS HARPUR/GAP

The prairie garden at Lady Farm, Chelwood, near Bristol.

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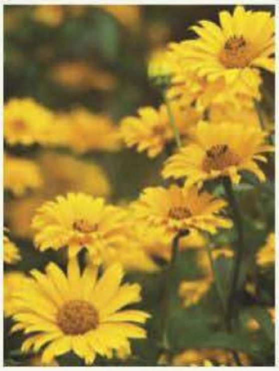

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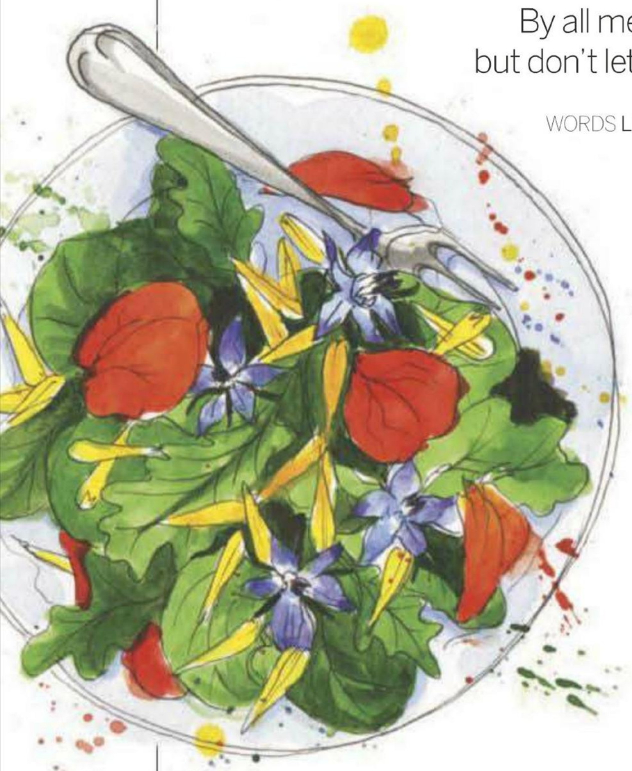
By all means relax with a summery drink, but don't let the courgettes get the better of you

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ ILLUSTRATION GEORGINA LUCK



THREE OF THE BEST...

Edible flowers

Edible flowers are so at home in allotment beds that it would be easy to enjoy them for looks alone, nestling brightly among the broad beans and courgettes. But each of these will add a distinctive taste and look to your cooking.

Calendula *(Calendula officinalis)*
The glowing, deep yolk-orange petals have a sweet but peppery taste, and look like little shards of sunlight sprinkled on to a salad.

Borage *(Borago officinalis)*
Sapphire-blue flowers with a cucumber taste are as happy with savoury salads as they are in fruity, summery drinks such as Pimms.

Nasturtium *(Tropaeolum majus)*
With a strongly peppery taste, whole nasturtium flowers look amazing scattered on salads.

THINGS TO DO

If you haven't got much time, just do these essential tasks…

Tomato plants keep sending out side shoots that draw energy away from the plant. Nip them out the moment you see them.

It's time to stop picking rhubarb and let it recover for next year. A deep drink and a mulch wouldn't go amiss.

Harvest garlic and hang bulbs in an airy place for two weeks so they'll store.

Sow carrots for winter. You will need to thin these to 'big carrot' spacing.

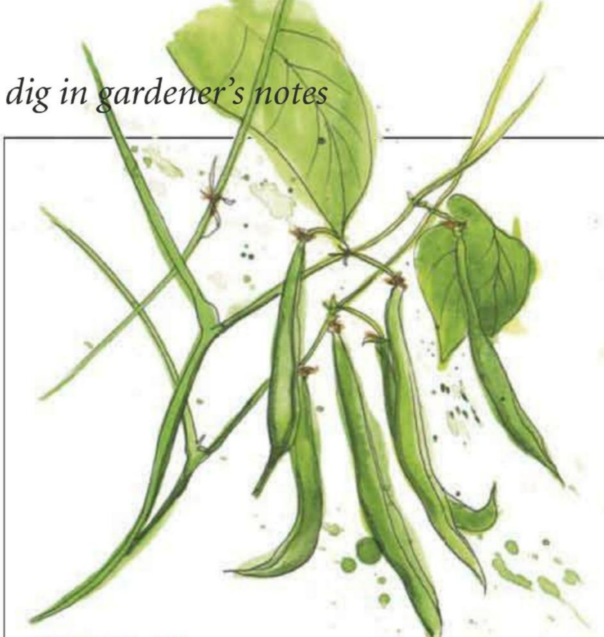
GARDEN BLOG...

Ben's Garden Blog

Ben's Garden Blog is intelligent, witty and so occasional that I fall upon each new one greedily, with a silly smile on my face. Ben is a jobbing gardener, but the blog is less a glimpse into his professional life and more the thoughts of a funny and well-read man doing ever-so slightly mind-numbing work.

Recent blogs have featured a group of estate agents being whipped into a knotweed-based frenzy; surviving the winter quiet as a Victorian beggar-style 'sham frozen-out gardener'; and Real Gardeners' Question Time (sample question: "Am I paying you to sit in your van and smoke rollies?").

As Ben does not make a song and dance about it, this blog rumbles along below the radar, feeling like a barely inhabited corner of the internet, and is all the more charming for it. http://bensgarden.wordpress.com



PRACTICAL JOB

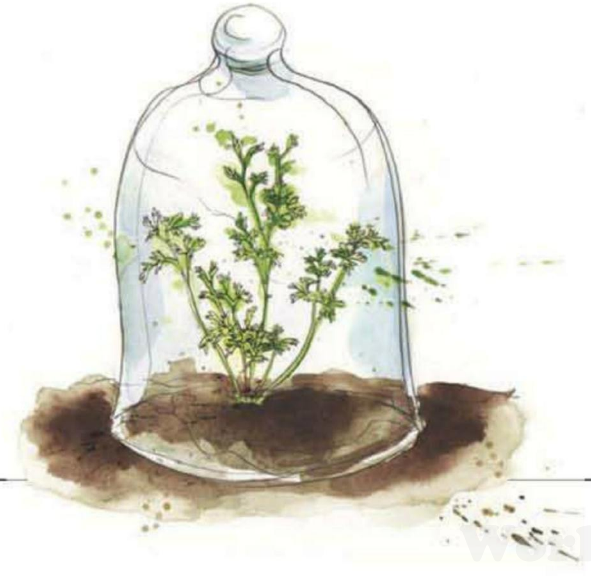
Lavish attention on beans

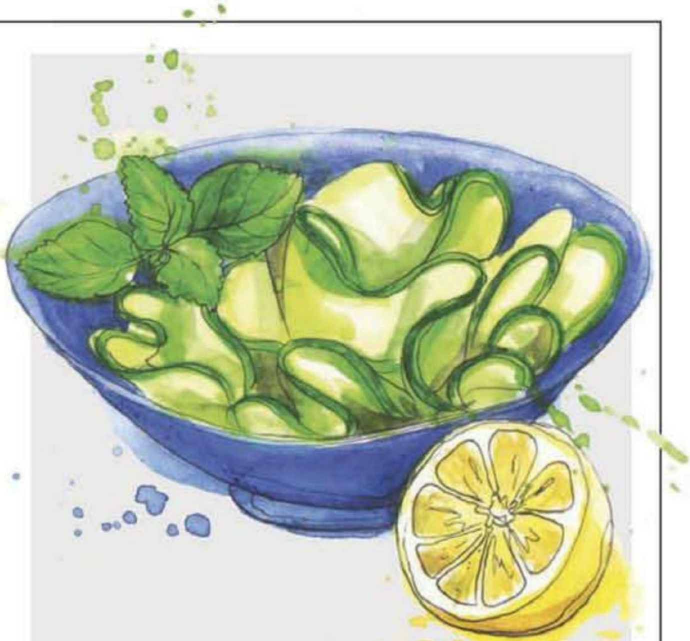
This obviously won't be a problem if we are experiencing a typical British summer, but in the event of hot, dry weather the flowers of beans can drop prematurely, leaving you beanless. The traditional remedy is to mist the flowers, but you can also try good, deep watering. This is also a moment to pay great attention to the frequent harvesting of beans. You want them young and tender and you want the plants to keep producing more, and as soon as you let them turn into tough, stringy old things the plant thinks its work is done.

PRACTICAL JOB

Biennial herbs for winter: parsley, chervil, coriander

Sow these three in spring and they put out a few unhappy looking leaves before running to flower and seed. It's all over in weeks. Sow them now and they clump up into happy, fat plants which – given sufficient protection – can keep making tasty leaves to herb up your cooking all winter long, before running to seed in spring. Plant them out into the soil once they are decent-sized plants and cover with a cloche, or plant into soil in a greenhouse or polytunnel.





ONE TO MAKE

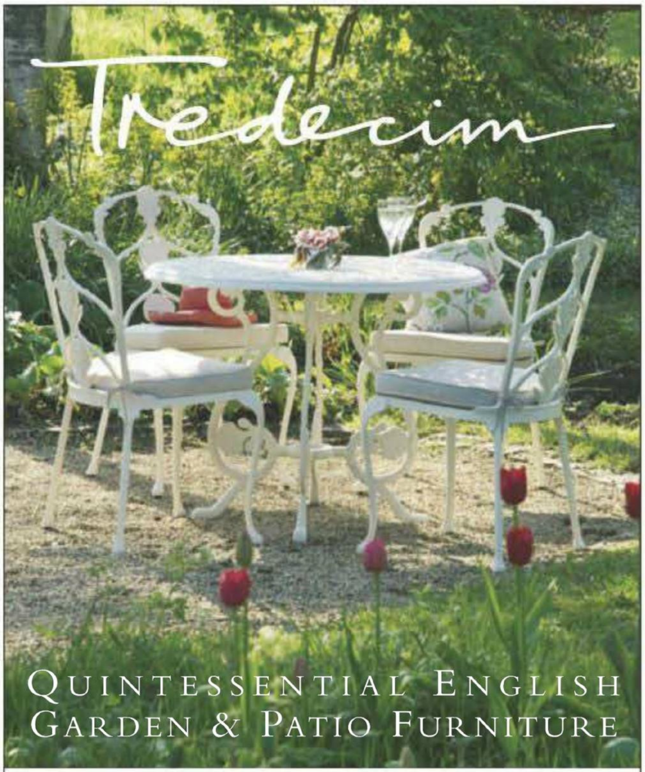
Courgette ribbons with lemon and mint

If you don't have courgettes coming out of your ears right now you are doing something wrong. Courgettes are the glut vegetable to end all glut vegetables: they can always be relied on to go spectacularly over the top. Keep picking them whether you are sick of them or not, or they will quickly turn to marrows and production will stop.

This is one of my favourite ways to eat them, adapted from a recipe in *Green Seasons Cookbook* by Bath-based vegetarian chef Rachel Demuth (www.demuths.co.uk). It's simple and pared back – yet quite delicious.

INGREDIENTS
4 medium courgettes
2 spring onions
Dressing:
4 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 garlic clove, crushed
Pinch of sea salt

Use a vegetable peeler to make the courgettes into ribbons, then blanch them for two minutes in boiling water. Drain, immerse them in cold water and drain again as soon as they're cold. Chop the spring onions finely and combine all of the dressing ingredients. Mix the spring onions with the courgettes, pour on the dressing and leave to marinade for at least 15 minutes before serving.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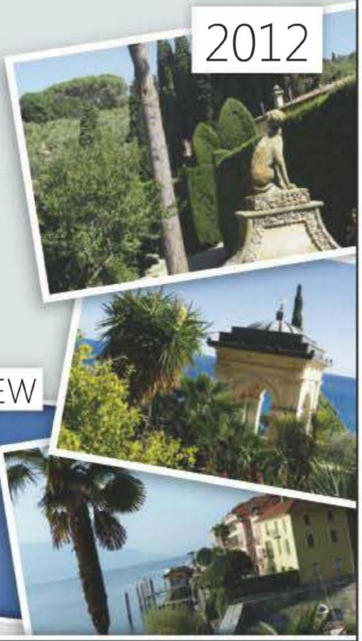
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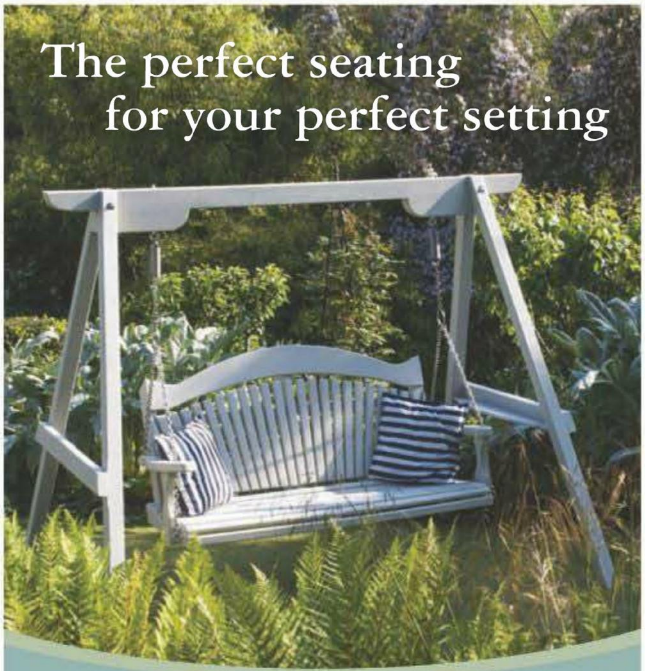
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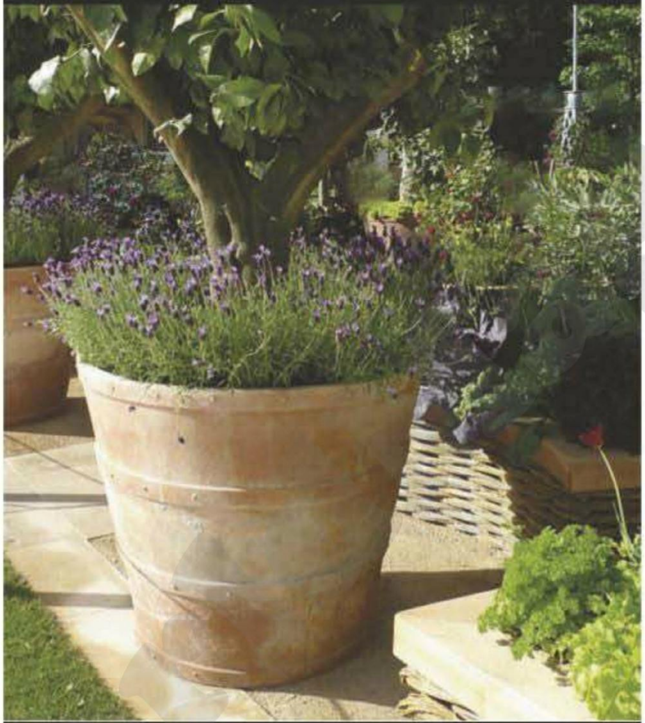
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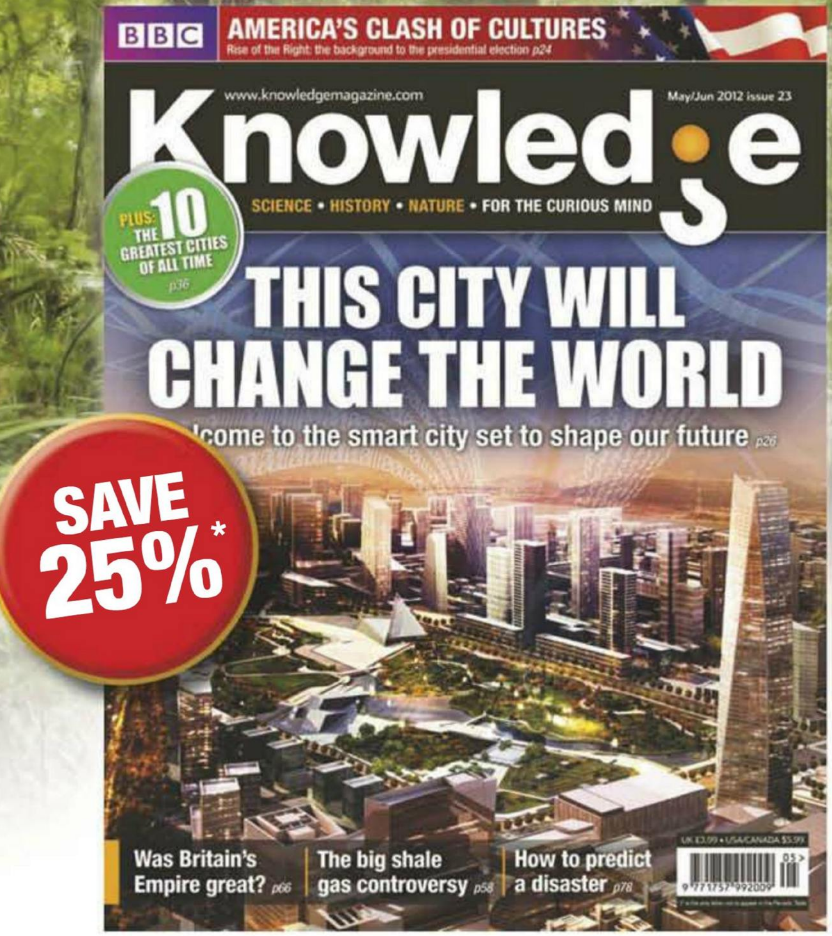

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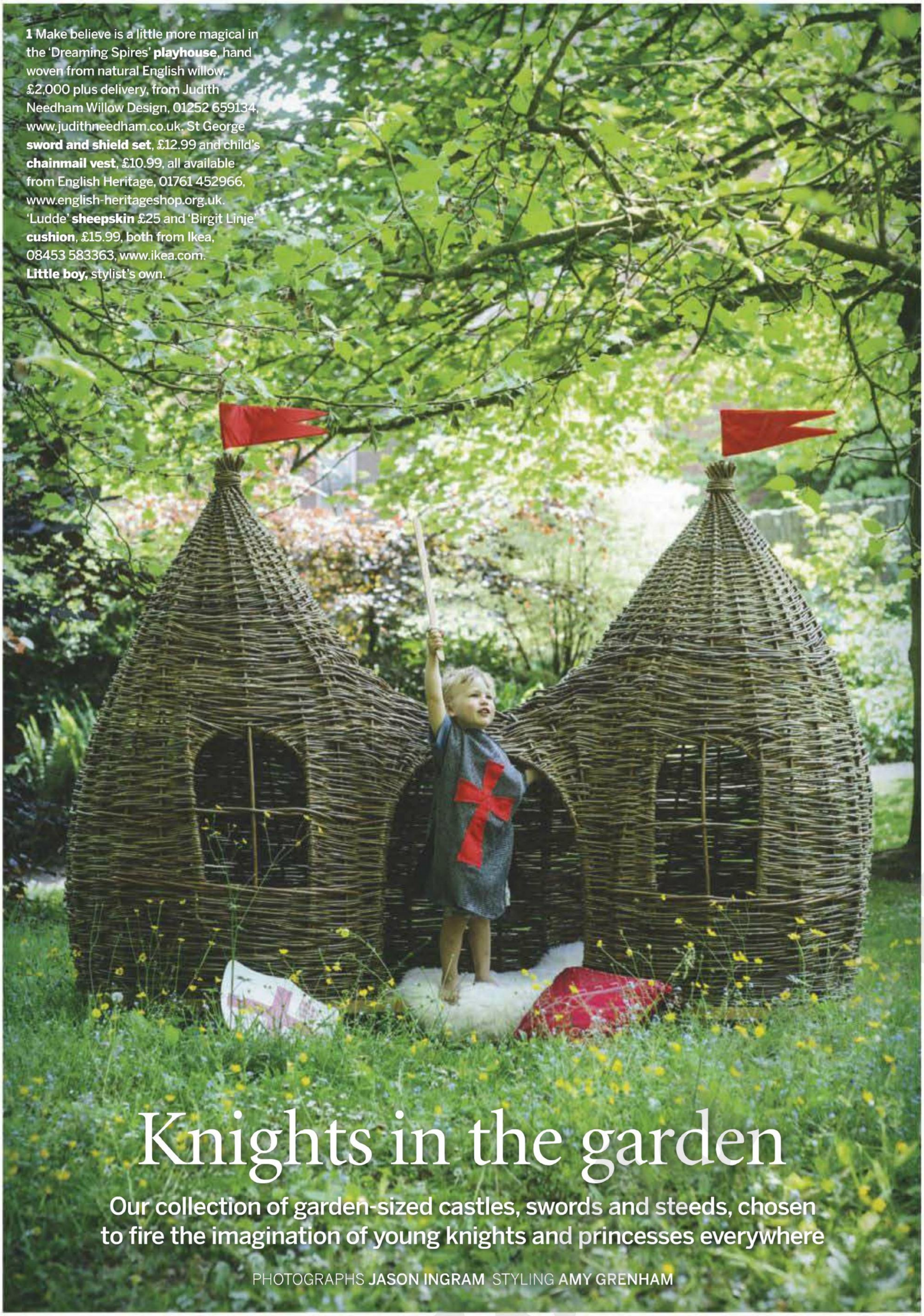

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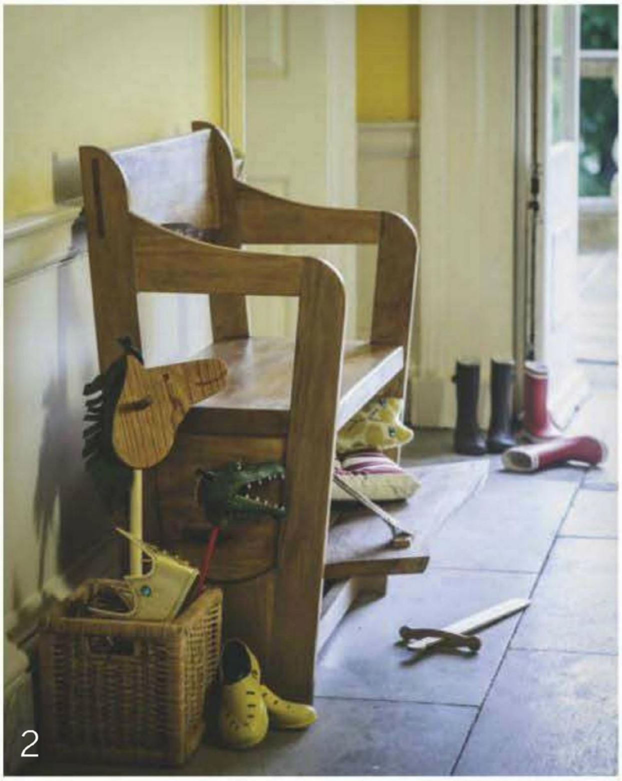

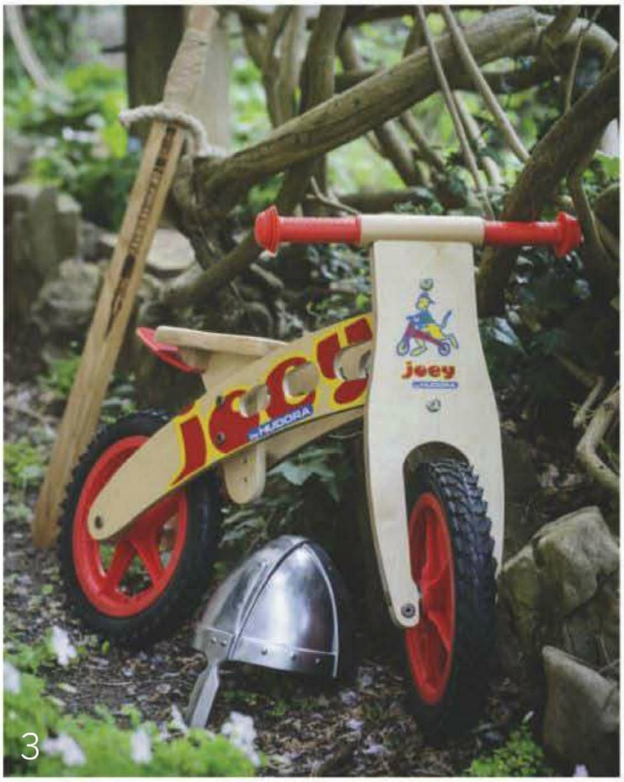

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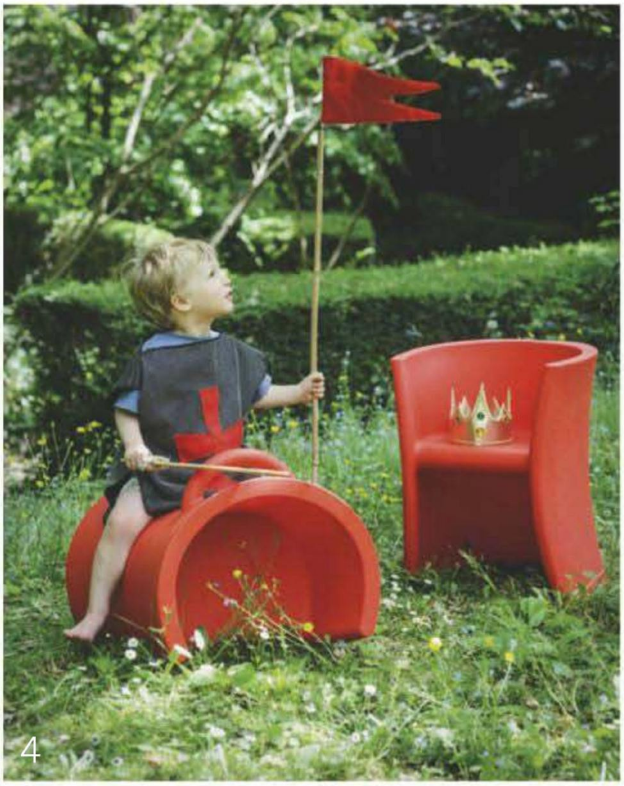

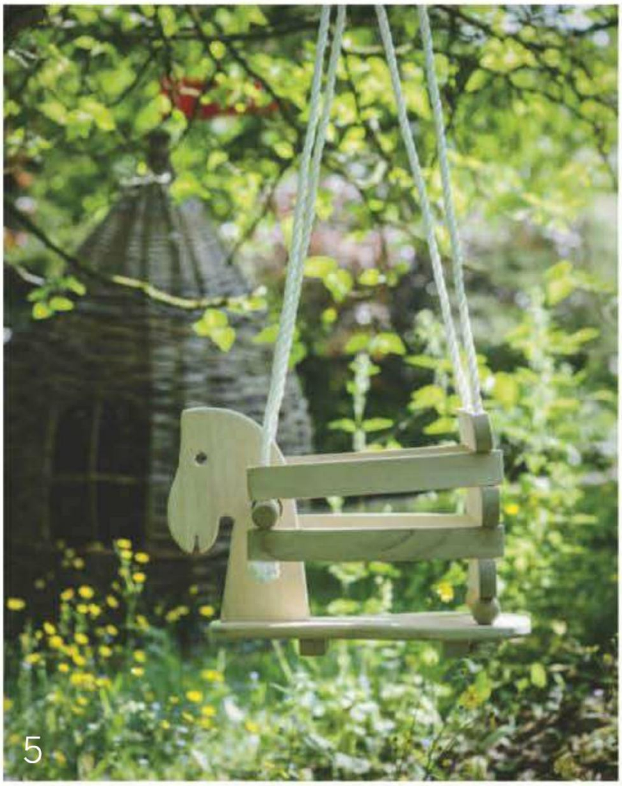

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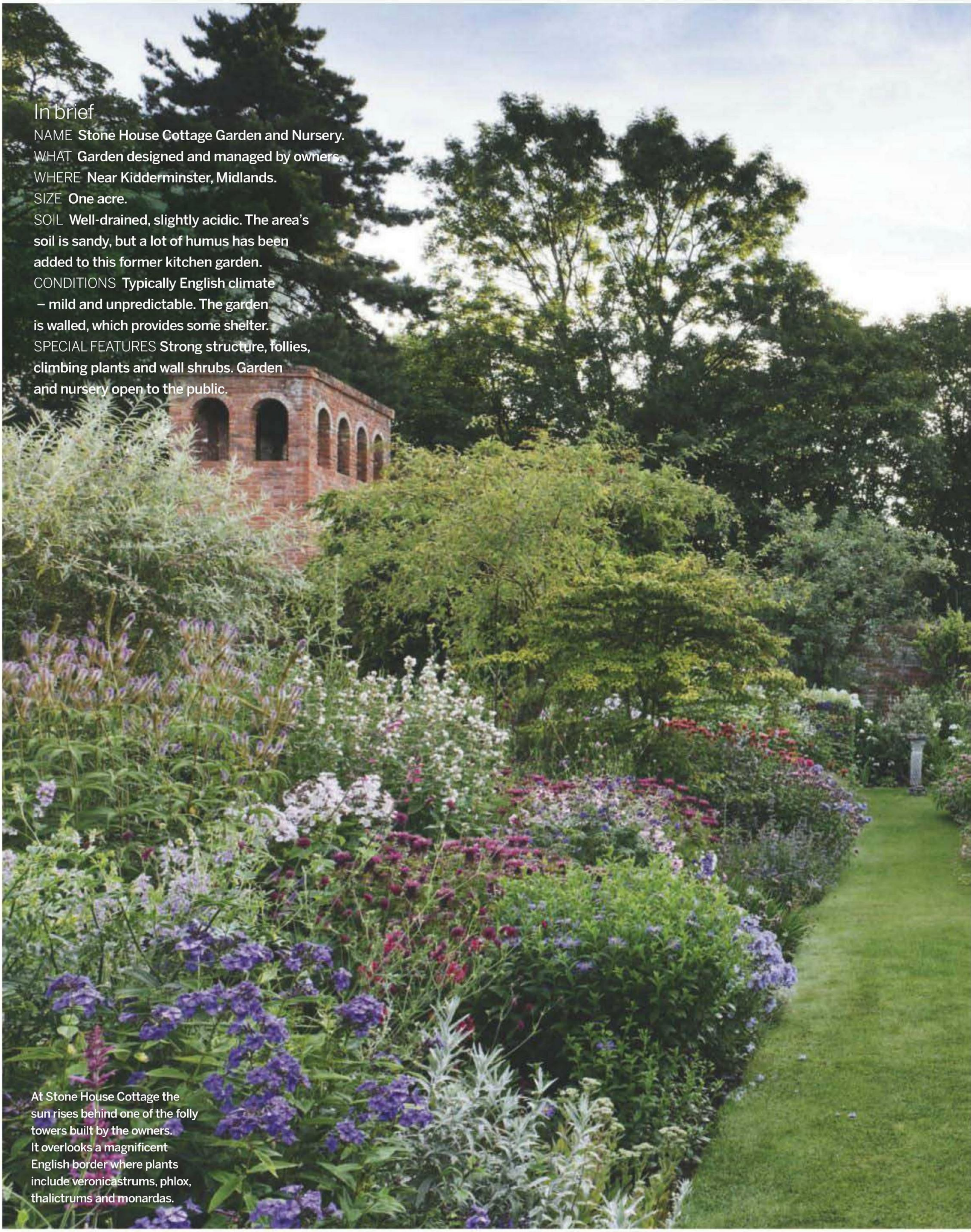
In brief

NAME **Stone House Cottage Garden and Nursery.**
WHAT **Garden designed and managed by owners.**
WHERE **Near Kidderminster, Midlands.**
SIZE **One acre.**
SOIL **Well-drained, slightly acidic. The area's soil is sandy, but a lot of humus has been added to this former kitchen garden.**
CONDITIONS **Typically English climate – mild and unpredictable. The garden is walled, which provides some shelter.**
SPECIAL FEATURES **Strong structure, follies, climbing plants and wall shrubs. Garden and nursery open to the public.**



At Stone House Cottage the sun rises behind one of the folly towers built by the owners. It overlooks a magnificent English border where plants include veronicastrums, phlox, thalictrums and monardas.

Plants chosen with *passion*

At Stone House Cottage, an enchanting Eden divided into intimate areas has been created from an old walled kitchen garden

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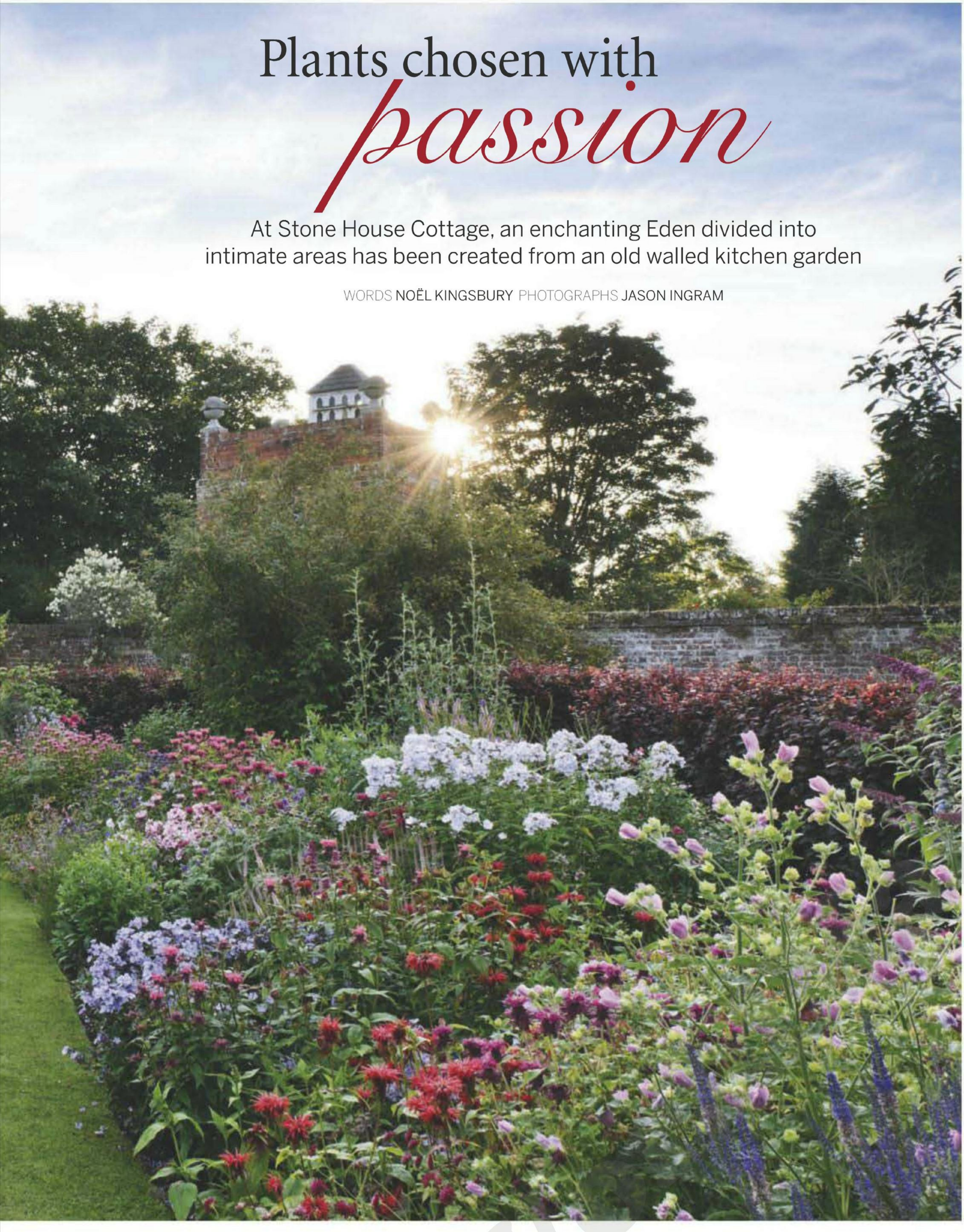


"Louisa planted a garden that explores both classic English summer colour schemes and plantsmanship"

The garden of Stone House Cottage first came to prominence in the 1990s. It made a big impact then, and visiting it again now it still stands out as highly individual. Like many gardens it is the creation of a couple. One of the interesting things about much garden-making is watching the results of two people working together, usually dividing their roles and very often achieving a harmony and balance as a result of following different interests and passions. The garden here is a classic case of a division of labour: he (James Arbuthnott) planned the garden and did the brickwork, she (Louisa Arbuthnott) the planting. Both followed their instincts and have done what they are good at; the result is a garden that is an intensely personal creation.

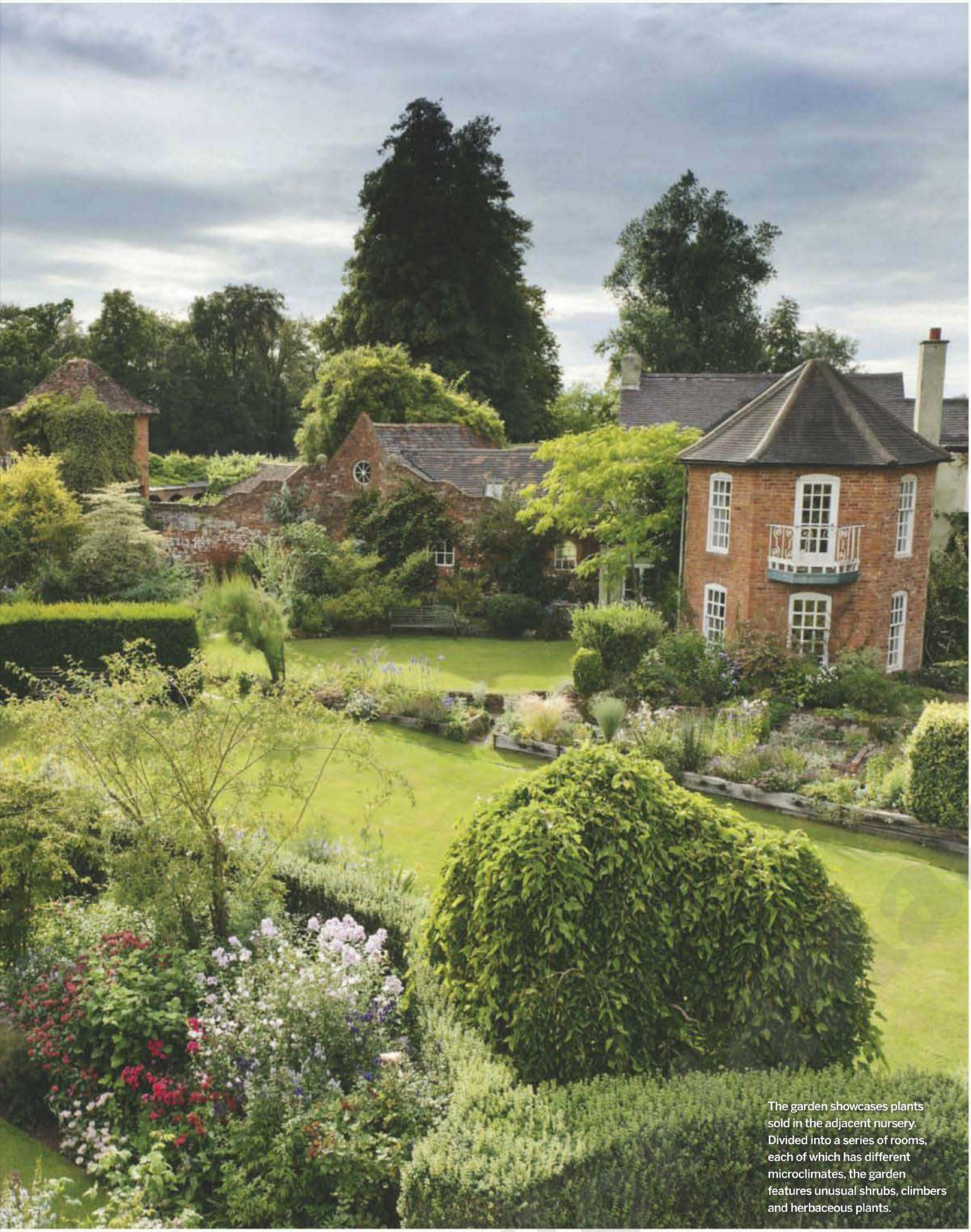
This is not a big garden, but a series of vistas laid out by James make it feel larger than its one acre. Dramatic diagonals and axes worthy of André Le Nôtre (famous for his formal gardens in France in the 17th century) are brought down to an intimate scale and so make the most of the space. There are lots of nooks and crannies and unexpected corners, and a feeling that having been around the garden you must go around again because surely there must be something you missed the first time – inevitably there is.

Red brick beauty

The overwhelming impression is of red brickwork. James and Louisa came here in 1975 when there was just an abandoned walled kitchen garden and the small gardener's cottage. James, a retired major in the Black Watch, discovered a passion for bricklaying and building, and over a 20-year period built a whole series of towers, mostly from recycled brick, which has led to the garden's nickname of 'the San Gimignano of the Midlands' – after the Italian town famous for its medieval towers. Louisa, who had always been passionate about gardening, planted a garden that explores both classic English summer colour schemes and plantsmanship. Outside the walls is a small nursery with plants propagated from the garden, one of those where rummaging around soon reveals all sorts of treasures.

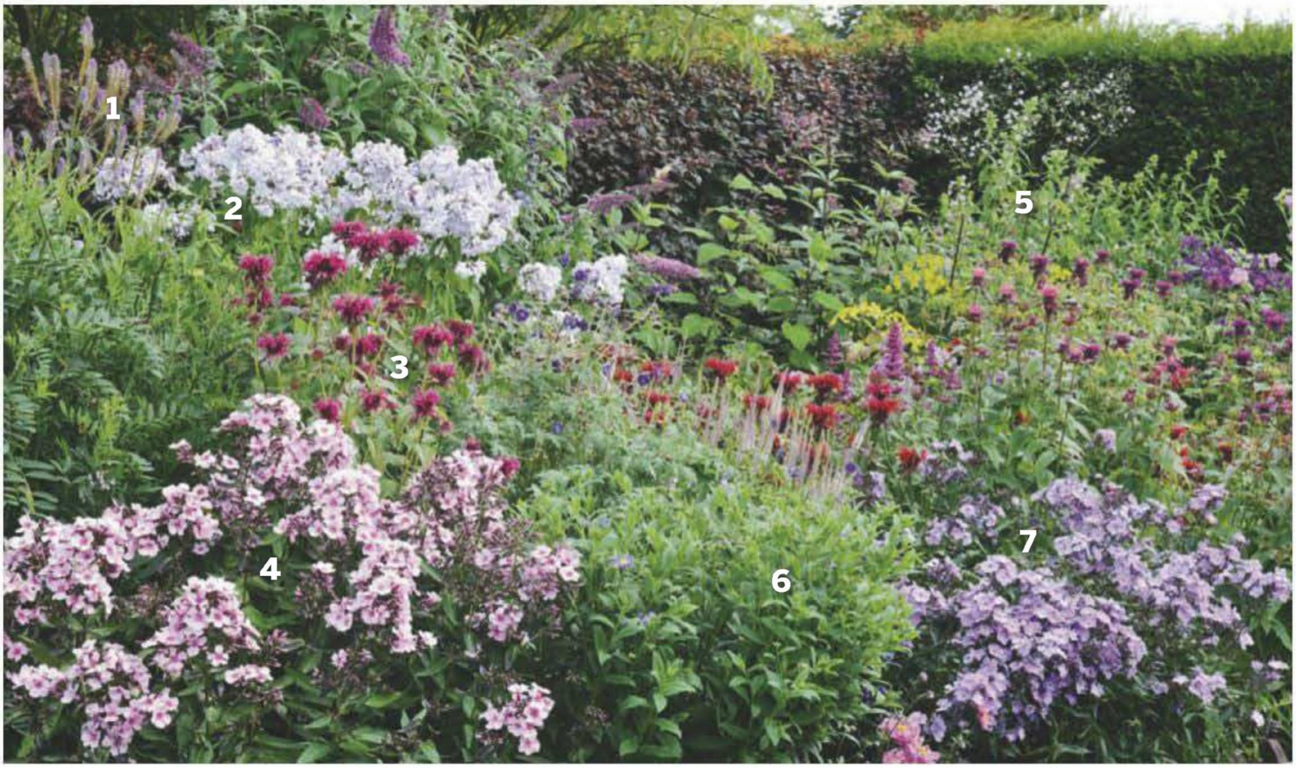
Like many plant-obsessed gardeners, Louisa says that she goes "from one passion to another," and not surprisingly given the situation, she has made long and effective use of climbers and wall shrubs. Walls are opportunities for climbers but also offer very specific microclimates – warmth on the sunny side and cool moist root runs on the shady side. Louisa has exploited such special situations for a huge variety of plants; indeed this is one of the best gardens anywhere to appreciate the possibilities of what to grow upwards. Walls can provide a warm spot for a shrub on the ▷

continued on page 38



The garden showcases plants sold in the adjacent nursery. Divided into a series of rooms, each of which has different microclimates, the garden features unusual shrubs, climbers and herbaceous plants.

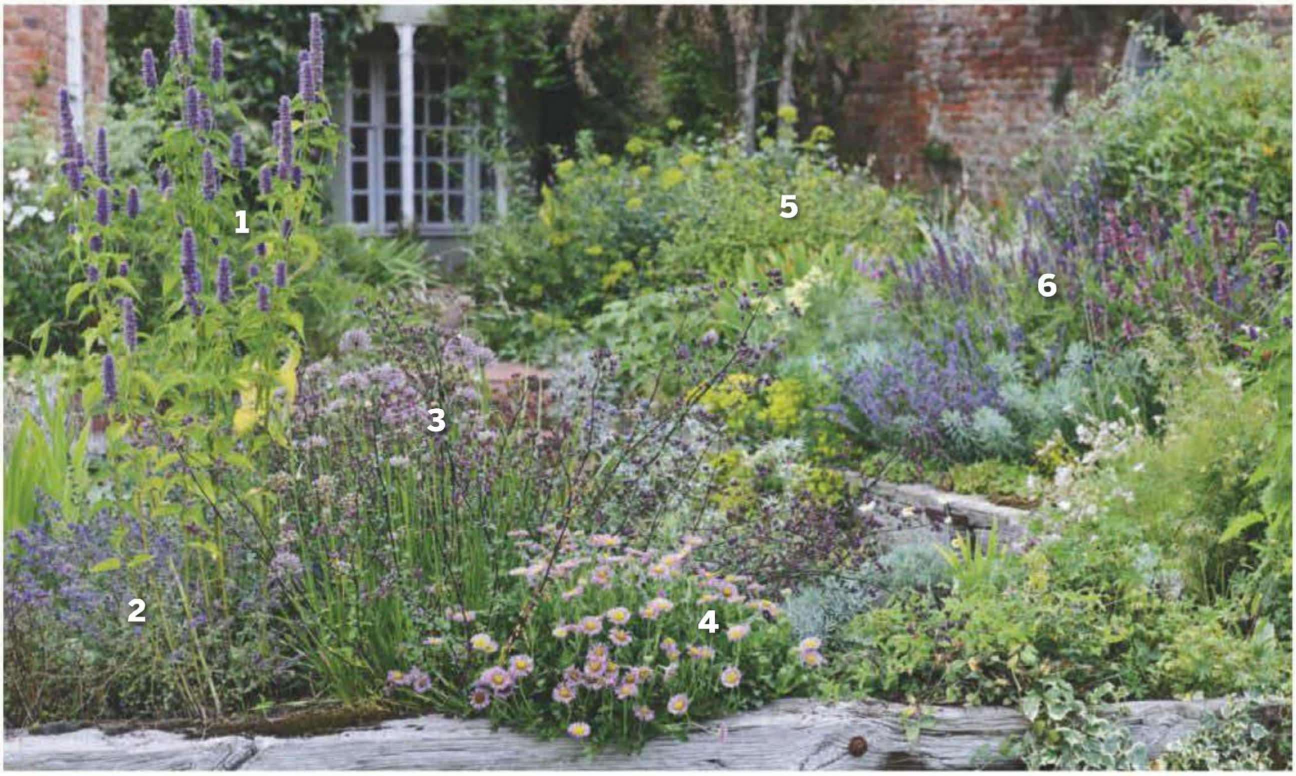
Plant combinations at Stone House Cottage



Classic English border, pretty in pink

Something of a classic mid-summer English border with harmonies of phlox (deliciously scented), veronicastrums and, for a stronger colour to lift the whole composition, the scarlet *Monarda* 'Adam'. Notice how the flowers of the very tall thalictrum appear backlit against the dark hedge and seem to float above everything else.

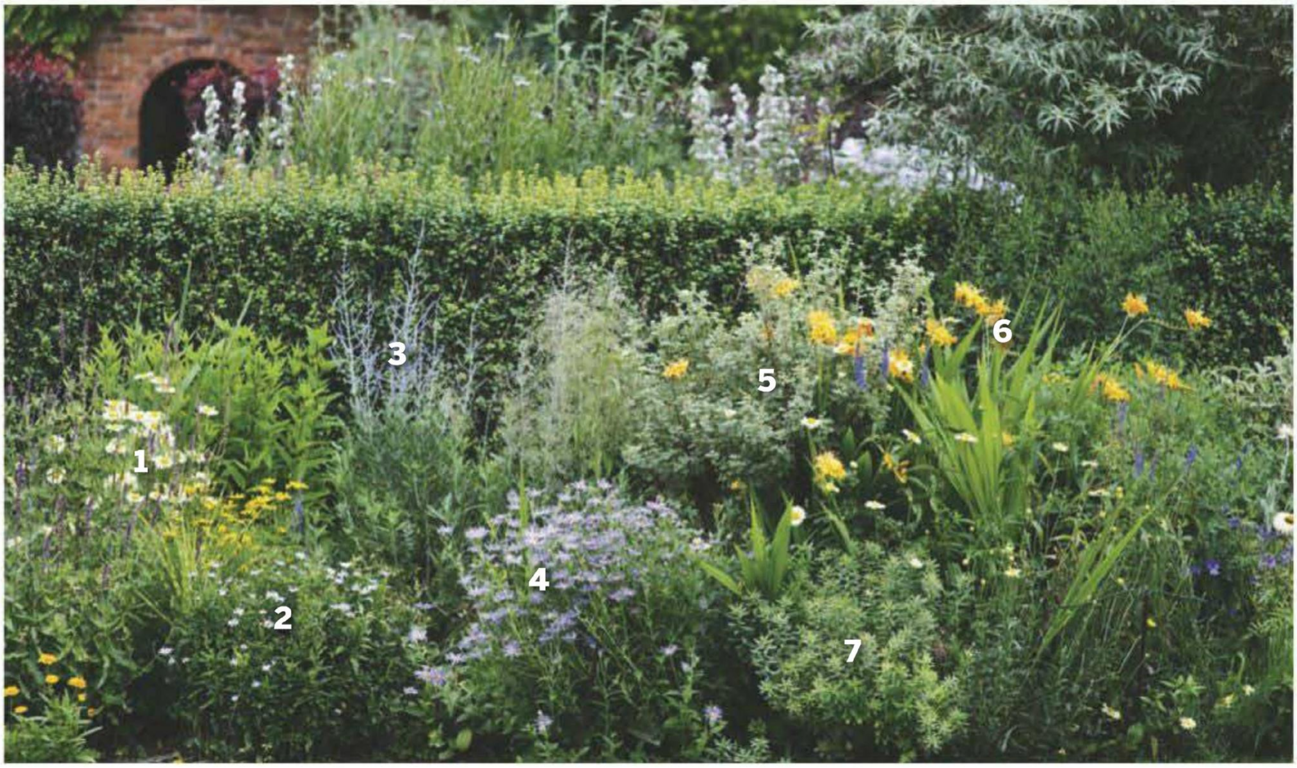
1 *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination'. **2** *Phlox paniculata* 'Lavendelwolke'. **3** *Monarda* 'Adam'. **4** *Phlox paniculata* 'Bright Eyes'. **5** *Thalictrum delavayi*. **6** *Veronicastrum virginicum* f. *roseum*. **7** *Phlox paniculata* 'Toits de Paris'.



A dry spot with shades of lilac, lemon and lime

Near the house is an area of the garden with raised beds made of old railway sleepers. This enables plants which appreciate good drainage to thrive. Some yellows, such as the bupleurum, work effectively to complement a lot of violet-purple tones. The agastache is short-lived but it self-seeds well. Low compact plants such as the erigeron work especially well in raised beds.

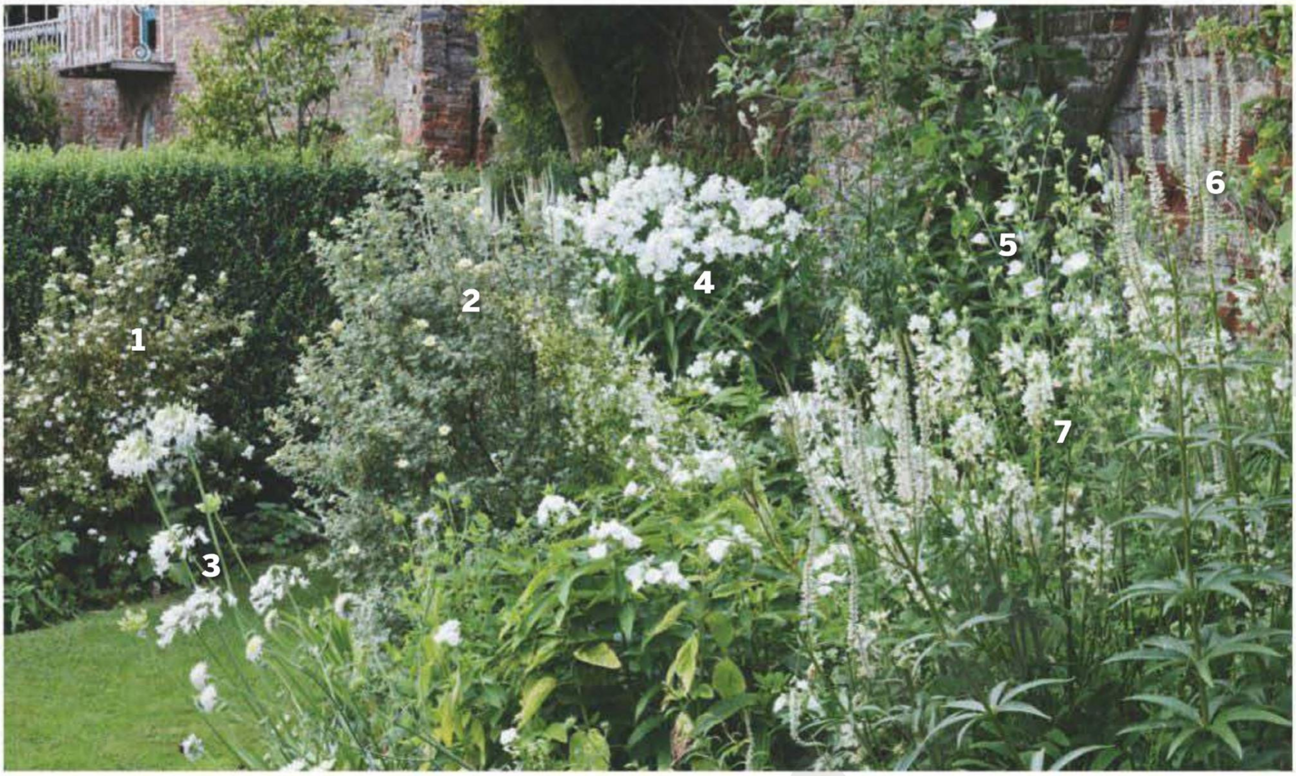
1 *Agastache foeniculum*. **2** *Nepeta* x *faassenii* 'Kit Cat'. **3** *Allium senescens*. **4** *Erigeron glaucus* 'Elstead Pink'. **5** *Bupleurum fruticosum*. **6** *Salvia pratensis* x *Salvia transylvanica*.



Subtle yellow and mauve medley

Soft yellows with purples and mauves make for a subtle blend of complementary colours. Relatively low plants at the front help conceal bare stems of taller varieties behind. The crocosmia here is not just a dominant colour but its sword-shaped leaves provide a contrasting texture in the border over many months.

1 *Anthemis tinctoria* 'EC Buxton'. **2** *Kalimeris incisa* 'Blue Star'. **3** *Perovskia atriplicifolia.* **4** *Aster thomsonii* 'Nanus'. **5** *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Vilmoriniana'. **6** *Crocosmia masoniorum* 'Rowallane Yellow'. **7** *Euphorbia pithyusa.*



A calm corner with a blend of whites

White plantings feel cool and sophisticated. Silver foliage helps enhance the effect, such as the potentilla here. Phloxes can be useful for big splashes of white, while the wispier forms of plants such as the veronicastrum emphasise texture and form. White borders are most effective in locations like this, shaded for part of the day.

1 *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Abbotswood'. **2** *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Vilmoriniana'. **3** *Agapanthus* (an unnamed white). **4** *Phlox paniculata* 'White Admiral'. **5** *Lavatera thuringiaca* 'Ice Cool'. **6** *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Album'. **7** *Galega* x *hartlandii* 'Alba'.

“Stone House Cottage, with its one-acre garden divided into different ‘rooms’, offers much inspiration for small or urban gardens”

▷ margins of hardiness. They can also help impose order on species with rangy stems or other awkward habits, whose branches can be tied to the wall or be pruned back to a framework close to it. In addition, foliage or flowers are often better displayed on a wall than on a free-standing plant.

One of Louisa’s passions is woodland plants: shade loving, intolerant of drying out, and often slow growing. Several north facing or shady spots reveal ferns or the elegant foliage or jewel-like flowers of woodlanders. She and James are fascinated by *Anemonopsis macrophylla*, which Louisa describes as “one of the most beautiful of all flowers.” In many cases these smaller species may be found at the foot of taller shrubs or climbers – a very effective use of the same space to grow a multiplicity of plants. Another way of using the same space twice is to follow Louisa’s suggestion to “let smaller and lighter climbers scramble over and through shrubs.”

Exuberant borders

In front of the house, partly on the site of some long-demolished greenhouses and cold frames, are raised beds built with old railway sleepers. They provide extra-sharp drainage for a variety of small bulbs, silvery-leaved evergreen shrubs and rockery plants. Further into the centre of the garden are a series of borders, whose straight lines frame the exuberant growth of roses and traditional border perennials. The planting explores various colour schemes: there are early to mid-summer blues and pinks, a white border and a stretch of yellow and blue. Interest through the mid-summer period is kept up well with perennials such as monardas and phloxes; maintenance is relatively low, and it is interesting to hear Louisa defy conventional gardening wisdom and declare: “I never dig up and divide the phlox as you are meant to.”

Stone House Cottage, with its one-acre garden divided into different ‘rooms’, offers much inspiration for people with small or urban gardens, and is a good reminder of just how much can be done with unusual or difficult spaces. If you enjoy meeting obscure species or want ideas for under-utilised walls and odd corners, discovering this garden is a joy. ☐

• Turn the page to discover eight of Louisa’s favourite plants

---

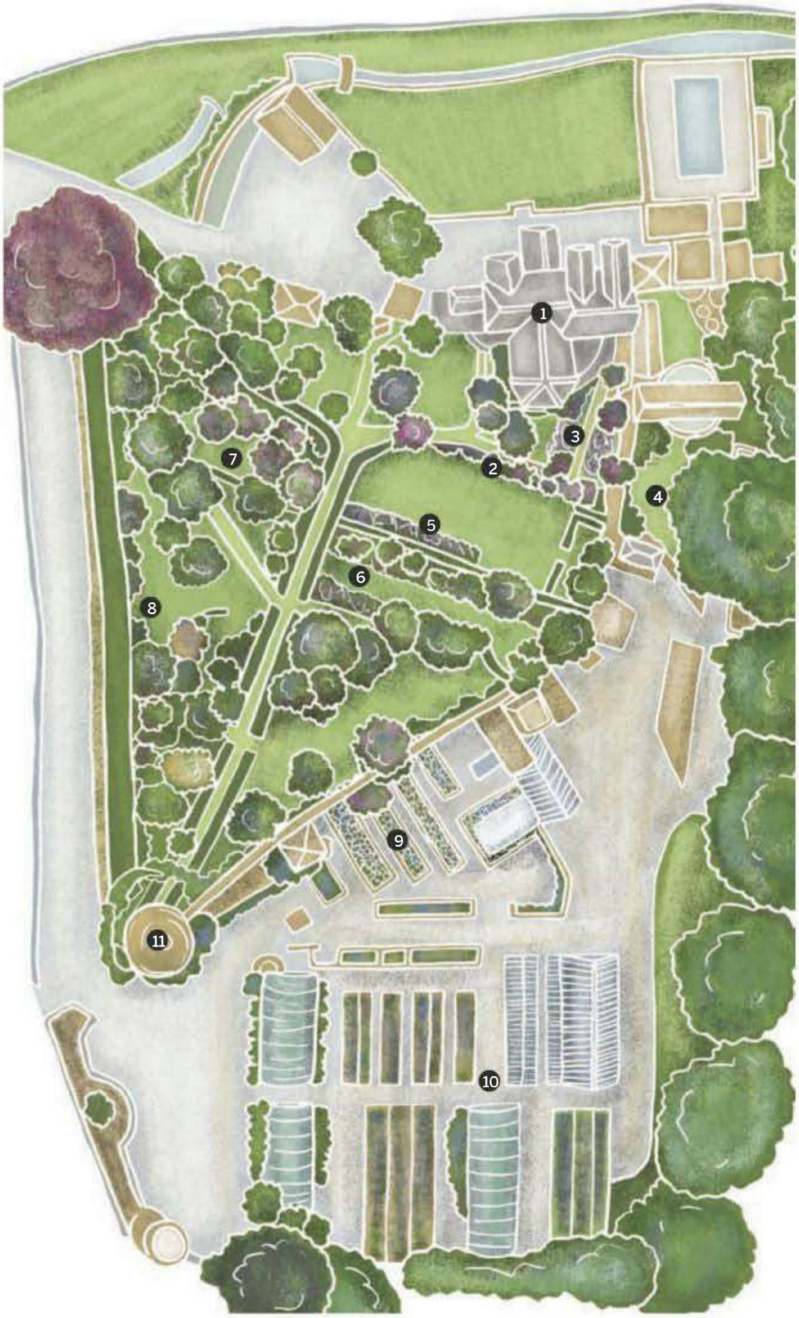
USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Stone House Cottage Garden and Nursery,
Near Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 4BG.
TEL 01562 69902 WEBSITE www.shcn.co.uk
OPEN 28 March-8 September, Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-5pm.

A view from the dry garden towards the yellow and mauve border (see previous page for plant details). The follies were built by James and, with the hedges, help divide the plot into a series of intimate areas.

Garden plan

1 The house
2 Raised bed built with railway sleepers
3 Raised bed on site of demolished greenhouse
4 Shady area for woodland plants
5 Yellow and mauve border
6 Main herbaceous borders
7 Sheltered area enclosed by yew hedges
8 Meadow planted with shrubs
9 Sales area
10 Nursery area
11 Entrance to garden



PLAN BY HANNAH MCVICAR

8 of Louisa's favourite plants

1 ***Clematis pitcheri***
"I love the little species clematis, they're very good for growing through other things." This one can potentially reach 4m high, and thrives on limestone soils.

2 ***Anemonopsis macrophylla***
A woodlander, Louisa says that this must have "no sun and no drought", with an acidic humus-rich soil. Waxy flowers and attractive divided foliage. Up to 60cm.

3 ***Desmodium tiliifolium***
A wall shrub, with the typical delicate divided leaves of the pea family. Sun and good drainage needed. Can reach 3m, but best if selectively cut back every year.

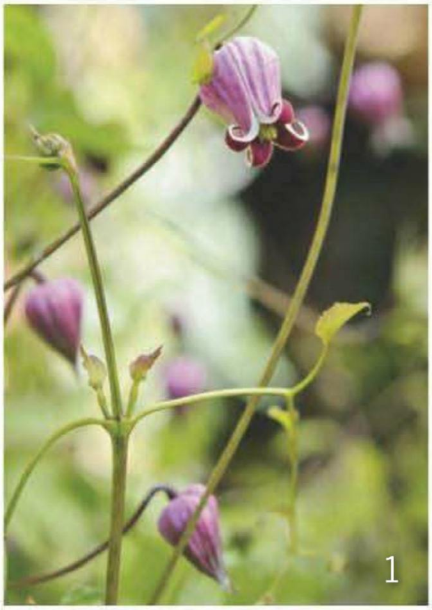
4 ***Dregea sinensis***
"Fantastic scent, with a hint of wet swimming things," says Louisa. White flowers bedeck the high climber with dark leaves. More than a hint of the tropics. Needs sun and shelter. Up to 4m tall.

5 ***Monarda 'Adam'***
"Like Sid Vicious with his spiky hair," is how Louisa describes this sun-loving perennial which likes lighter soils. This is "the best runner, twice as big as it was last year." Grows up to 90cm tall.

6 ***Lythrum salicaria 'Robert'***
Paler pink version of a deservedly popular perennial, often flowering for months, with a useful upright branching habit. Sun, fertile soil and good in wet places. 1.2m.

7 ***Roscoea auriculata 'Floriade'***
"Very useful for doubling up after spring bulbs," says Louisa of these late-emerging Asian perennials, which thrive in moist humus-rich soils and light shade. To 50cm.

8 ***Veratrum album* 'Irish Green'**
A form of a slow-to-establish but very long-lived perennial with beautiful pleated leaves and green flowers. Likes moist, well-drained soil. Grows up to 1m.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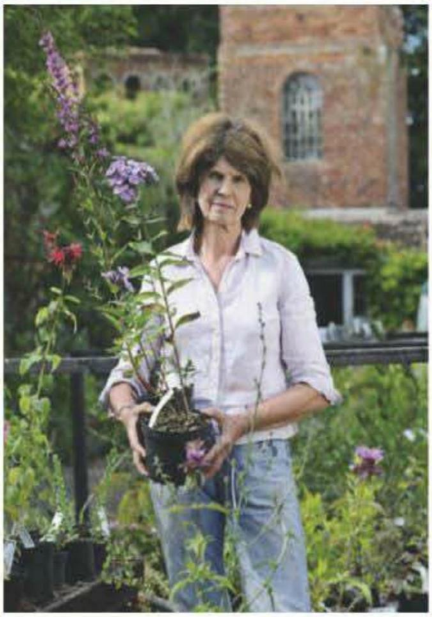

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Pots of scarlet

Combining deep reds and dark purples will guarantee a display with depth and drama right through to the autumn

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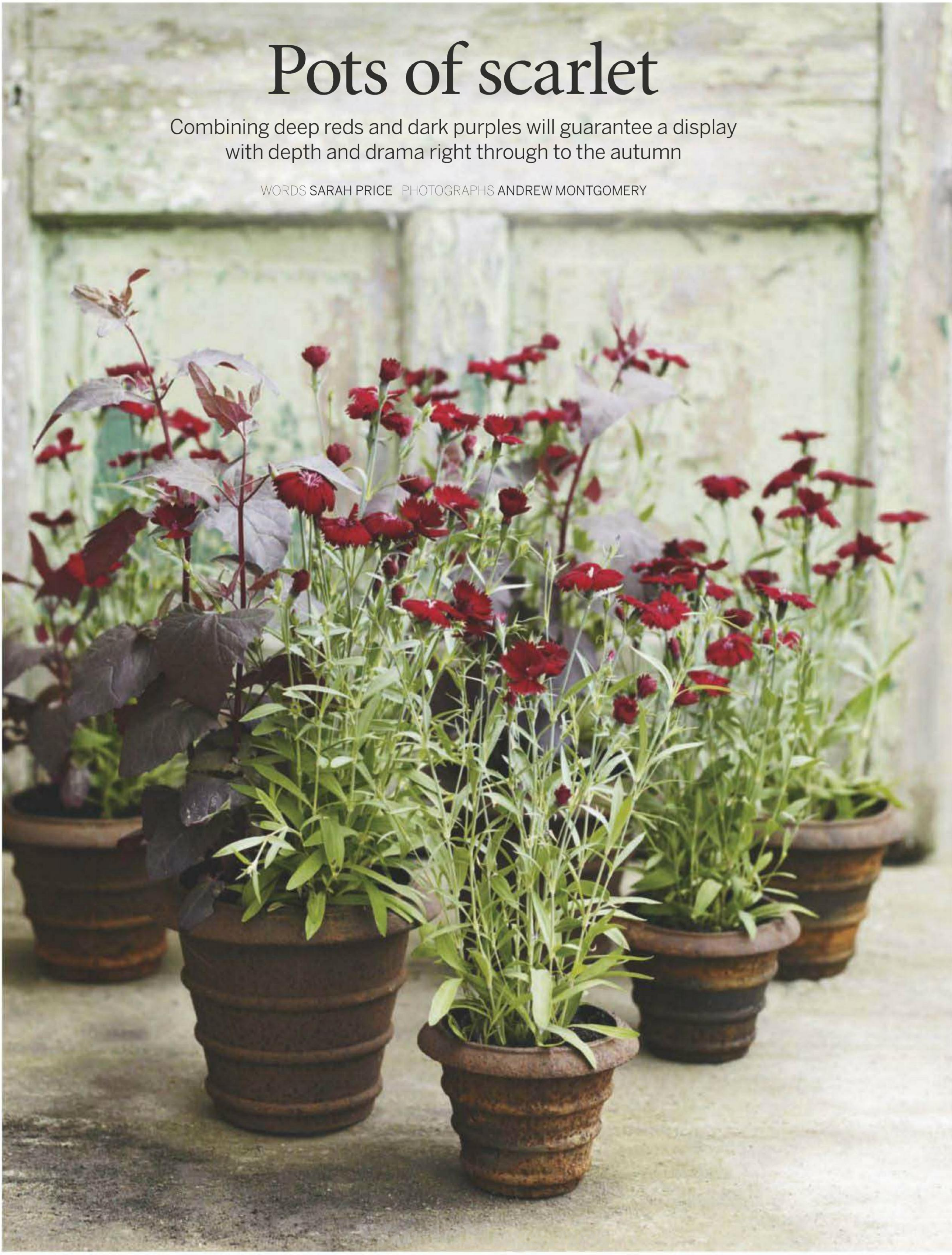
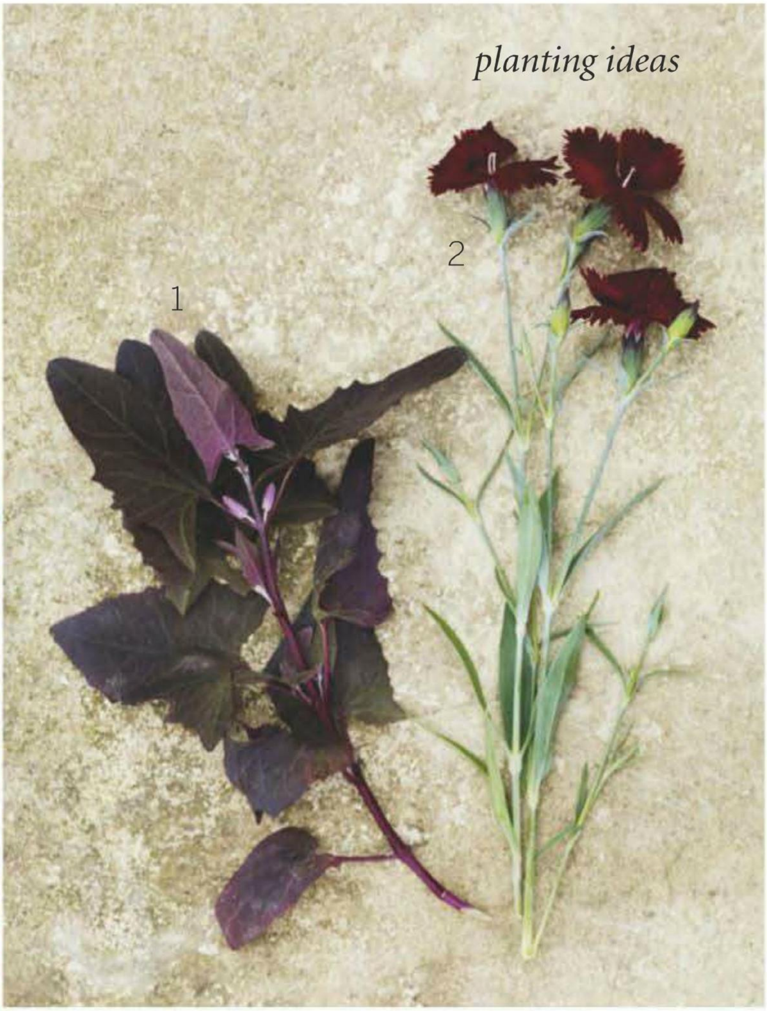




Pinks in pots

Come July I'm reaching for richer, more sumptuous colours and creating bolder statements. It felt like a guilty pleasure to use these *Dianthus*, not as classy perhaps as their in-vogue species counterparts, *D. carthusianorum* and *D. cruentus.* There's a faded splendour about their petals, which look like pieces of ruffled, crimson velvet. They also have an intoxicating, sweet clove-like scent, just the way 'pinks' should. I get an instant satisfaction from putting dramatic, rich tones together. The staging of these cast iron pots, against a pale green door, plays on the complementary colours of the plant: glaucous green leaf and stem, and the scarlet petals.

How to achieve the look

Colours and shapes

Red orache *Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra* is easy to grow. The leaves are edible and look good in salads, a vegetable plot or in a vase where its purple foliage adds instant depth. It seeds freely after flowering, a quality I love, especially as the purple seedlings are so easy to see and move if in an undesirable position.

Choosing pots

Repetition and change of scale is a powerful design principle. Look out for pots of the same shape and material but that come in a series of sizes. The classic flowerpot shape looks fantastic repeated at different scales and on different heights. This arrangement would look good on a flight of steps. Look out for interesting variations on traditional designs: the detailed bands around the iron pots and their pronounced rims cast shadow detail and make a wonderful silhouette.

Compost and care

Dianthus like well-aerated and free-draining soil, qualities of their natural habitat, so make sure the pot has good drainage holes and take care to protect plants from excessive winter wet. Given a sunny position, the dianthus will bloom extensively but deadhead the plants to prolong the drama. After flowering, save the red orache seeds and consider taking cuttings of the dianthus as it is an annual plant.

Plants

Quantities for 3 medium-sized pots of dianthus with red orache, and 4 small pots of single dianthus. More dianthus may be required depending on the size of the plants sourced.

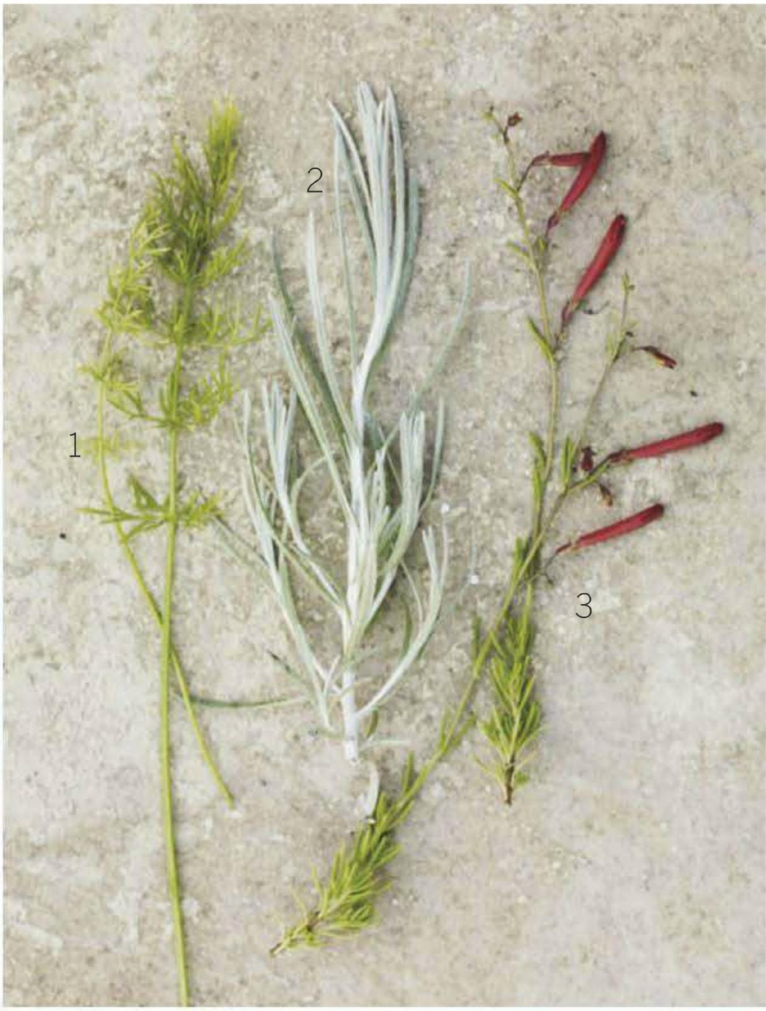
1 ***Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra***
AMOUNT 3
BLOOMS July to August
HEIGHT up to 120cm

2 ***Dianthus chinensis* x *barbatus* Elation Series Red (*Dianthus caryophyllus* 'Fenbow Nutmeg Clove' would also look good.**
AMOUNT 7
BLOOMS June to August
HEIGHT 60cm

Suppliers

Thompson & Morgan
Tel 0844 2485383,
www.thompson-morgan.com
Pots and photoshoot: **Artefacts at the Medicine Garden,** Cobham. Tel 07894 149865, www.artefacts.uk.net

La Belle Chaurienne
Haricots Lingots
Castelnaudary



Rustic herbs

Herbs are an appropriate choice for these pretty, rustic tins that once contained hearty French stews. The writing on the tins is beautiful and the italic font exactly matches the dainty tubular orange red flowers of this small penstemon. Arranged in a line, they could go along a generous kitchen windowsill or small ledge on a garden wall. The smaller scale makes you pay closer attention to the detail of the plants and the herbs can of course be used in the kitchen.

Whatever the size of the planting, I look to create a pattern of repeating colour and form. Here, silver hummocks of the strong-smelling curry plant *Helichrysum italicum* and the fresh, frothy green of the caraway *Carum carvi* are alternated, leading your eye along the sunny display.

How to achieve the look

Colours and shapes

Penstemon pinifolius is a compact, evergreen cultivar with needle-like foliage and bright yet dainty tubular orange-red flowers. Its small stature means it is often grown within an alpine display. Other plants to consider in this arrangement are chives, which would create a fresh upright accent. In contrast the wonderfully fragrant Corsican mint, *Mentha requienii,* would hug the compost and slowly creep over the sides of the tin. Chard, *Beta vulgaris,* could be used instead of penstemon to pick out the red italic font, while fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare* would create a similar feathered effect to the caraway.

Choosing pots

Drill holes in the bottom of the tins and brush a waterproof layer of clear lacquer or varnish over the tins and labels.

Compost and care

These are plants that appreciate sunshine and well-drained ground. Mix in grit to make sure your compost is free draining. Caraway is a hardy biennial so will need replacing. Regularly snip away at the caraway and curry plant to maintain compact plants. Though only 20cm tall, *Penstemon pinifolius* will eventually spread outwards to 25cm and so in time will need potting on or planting out.

Plants

1 *Carum carvi*
AMOUNT 1
BLOOMS June to August
HEIGHT 60cm

2 *Helichrysum italicum*
AMOUNT 3
BLOOMS July to September
HEIGHT 90cm

3 *Penstemon pinifolius*
AMOUNT 3
BLOOMS June onwards
HEIGHT 25cm

Suppliers

Constantine Garden Nursery
Fir Tree Farm, Falmouth,
Cornwall TR11 5PL.
Tel 01326 340593,
www.firtreefarmnursery.co.uk

Herbal Haven
Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3YL.
Tel 01799 540695,
www.herbalhaven.com

La Belle Chaurienne
Cassoulet au Confit d'Oie
Castelnaudary
2 Parts
840 g
La Belle Chaurienne
Haricots Lingots
Cuisinés à la graisse d'Oie
Castelnaudary
4 Parts

Still life

Lilies are so perfect in form that a stem or two is enough. Could you imagine an angel holding more than one delicate stem in Botticelli's *The Annunciation?* The secret here is the deep rich plum, present in flower bud, bloom, foliage, and stem. The dense, dark purple spikes of the grass *Molinia caerulea* 'Edith Dudszus' and the similarly rich foliage of the red orache *Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra* allow the exquisite trumpet-shaped form of the lily *Lilium formosanum* var. *pricei* to be brought into relief. These are plants with staying power. The molinia will provide an attractive veil of colour from late summer through to autumn, while the flower and seeds of the atriplex look beautiful later in the season. The modest pot, an old milk can with flaking paint, brings this sophisticated selection of plants back down to earth.

How to achieve the look

Colours and shapes

Lilium formosanum var. *pricei* is shorter than the similar looking more common *L. regale.* It grows to just 30-45cm tall making it ideal for smaller pots. The highly scented flowers are full-sized and have pronounced deep burgundy veining, and a fresh green throat instead of the more common yellow. Try experimenting with other varieties but stick to just one variety per pot. 'Edith Dudszus' is one of the shorter more compact molinia cultivars and grows to 90cm. *M. caerulea* 'Moorhexe' is an alternative: slightly shorter with near black, well-defined seedheads.

Compost and care

Prefers a sunny spot. The molinia and the atriplex will help keep the lily's roots in the shade. Plant the lily bulbs in autumn, so their roots can develop over winter, 12 cm deep in a loam-based potting compost such as John Innes no. 2 and add grit. The bulbs are hardy, but the shoots appear early and may be damaged by frost unless sheltered. Watch out for lily beetle. They are scarlet and black and very visible and need to be picked off by hand. Dead-head faded blooms but leave foliage on the bulb to die back naturally. Make sure the pot is well drained through the winter months.

Plants

1 *Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra*
AMOUNT 1
BLOOMS July to August
HEIGHT Up to 120cm

2 *Molinia caerulea* 'Edith Dudszus'
AMOUNT 1
BLOOMS July onwards
HEIGHT 90cm

3 *Lilium formosanum* var. *pricei*
AMOUNT 1
BLOOMS Summer
HEIGHT 30cm-45cm

Suppliers

Beth Chatto Gardens and Nursery
Elmstead Market, Colchester,
Essex CO7 7DB.
Tel 01206 822007,
www.bethchatto.co.uk

Sarah Raven
Tel 0845 092 0283,
www.sarahraven.com

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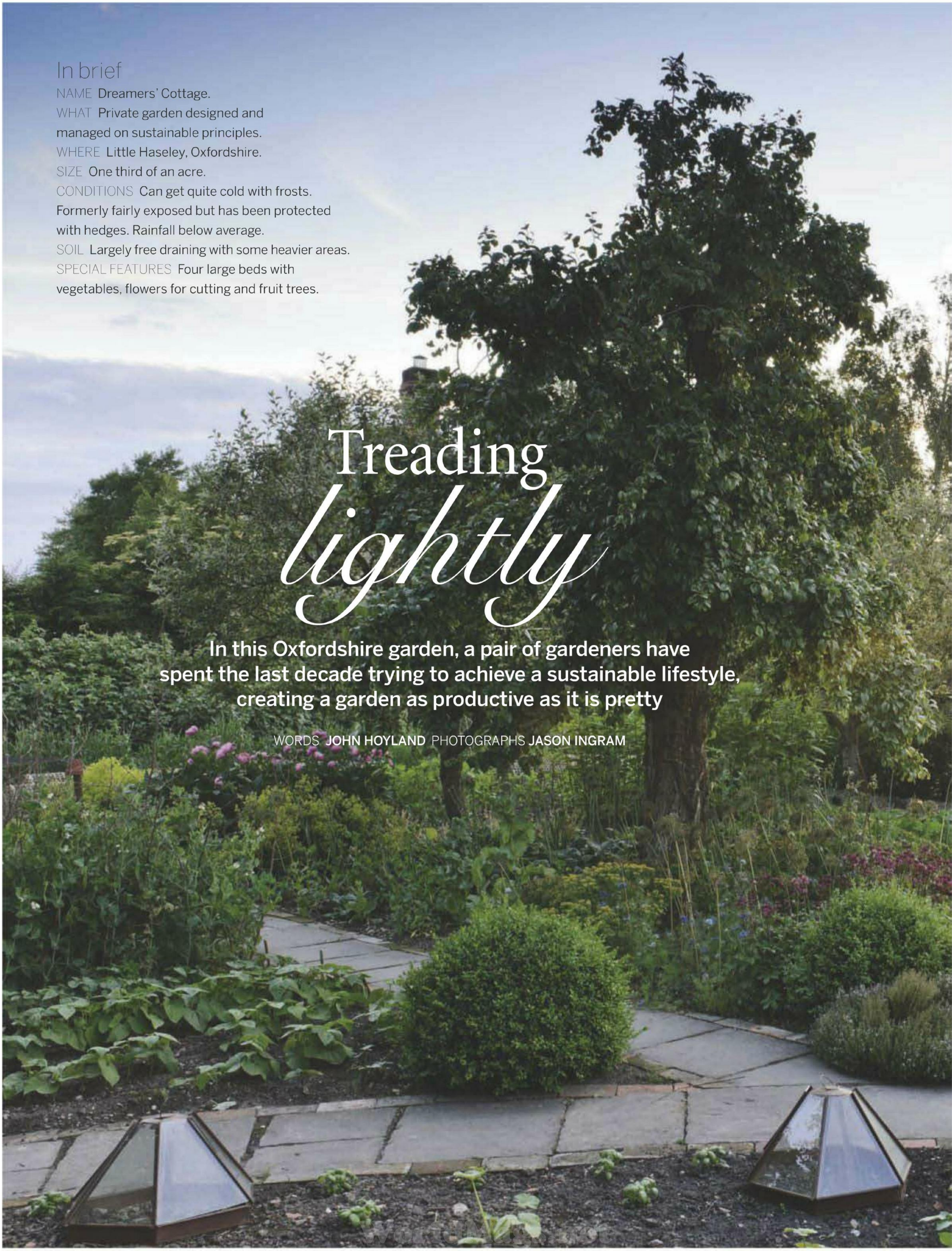


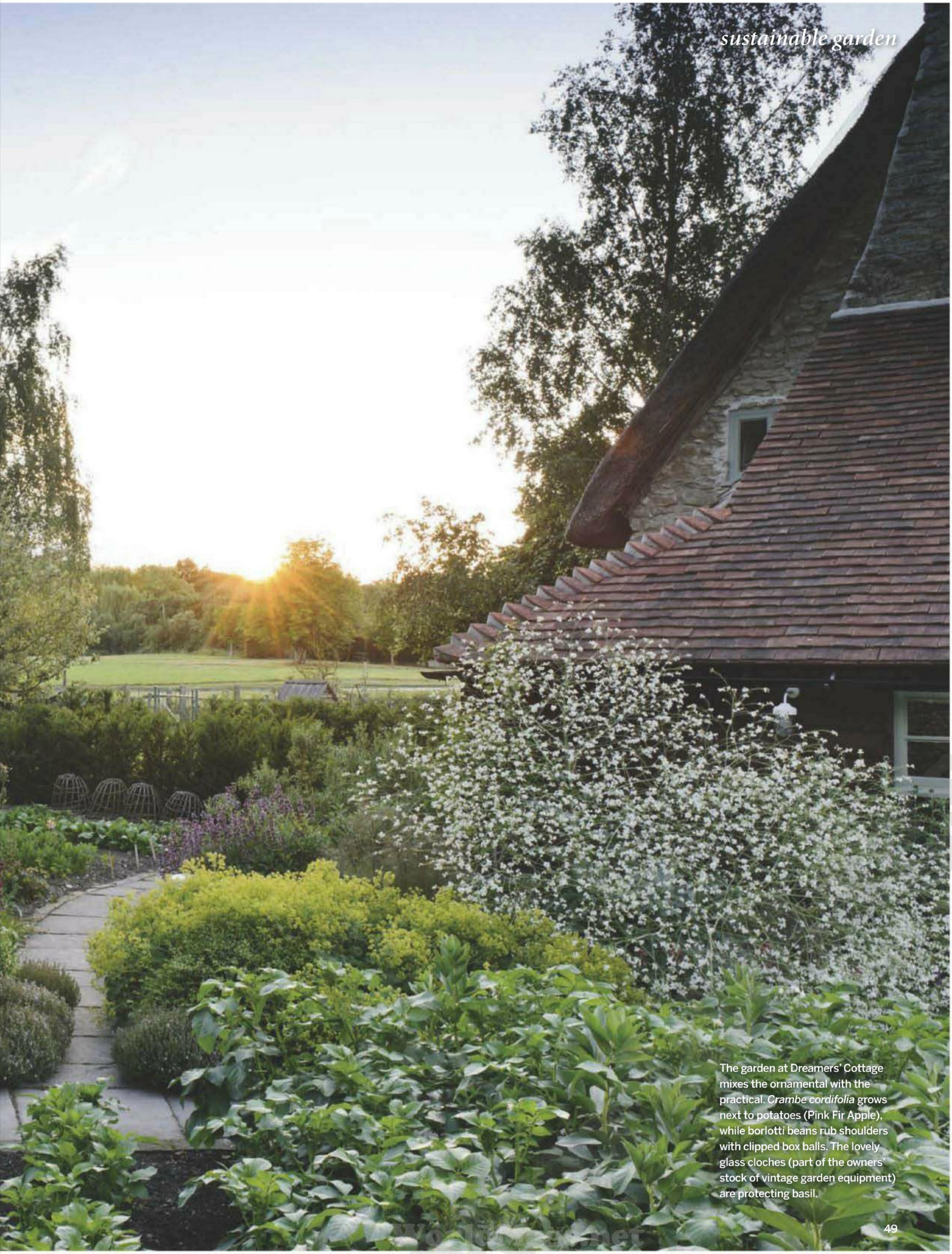
Treading *lightly*

In this Oxfordshire garden, a pair of gardeners have spent the last decade trying to achieve a sustainable lifestyle, creating a garden as productive as it is pretty

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

In brief

NAME Dreamers' Cottage.
WHAT Private garden designed and managed on sustainable principles.
WHERE Little Haseley, Oxfordshire.
SIZE One third of an acre.
CONDITIONS Can get quite cold with frosts. Formerly fairly exposed but has been protected with hedges. Rainfall below average.
SOIL Largely free draining with some heavier areas.
SPECIAL FEATURES Four large beds with vegetables, flowers for cutting and fruit trees.



The garden at Dreamers' Cottage mixes the ornamental with the practical. *Crambe cordifolia* grows next to potatoes (Pink Fir Apple), while borlotti beans rub shoulders with clipped box balls. The lovely glass cloches (part of the owners' stock of vintage garden equipment) are protecting basil.

Treading lightly upon the earth is an ambition for many gardeners, though few achieve it as completely as Piers Newth and Louise Allen in their Oxfordshire garden. After 25 years of professional gardening the couple decided to focus on living as sustainably as possible, and the garden is central to their aspirations. It froths with flowers, fruit and vegetables, is alive with chickens and bees, and the pair bubble over with passion for it. It is as productive as it is pretty, providing 75 per cent of their fruit and vegetables. “Anyone can do this – growing vegetables is not difficult,” insists Louise, with the confidence of decades of experience. “If the sun shines, we garden.”

They both trained at Wisley and for 18 years Louise was curator of the Oxford Botanic Garden while for much of that time Piers looked after the associated Harcourt Arboretum. Two years ago they left their jobs to live and garden in a way that doesn’t abuse the world’s natural resources. The garden now is the result of years of hard graft, at evenings and weekends. When they arrived ten years ago there were 27 Leylandii trees in the third-of-an-acre garden. “The first thing we did was remove the trees and then we lived with the garden for a year before deciding what to do with it,” explains Piers. “You have to get to know a place, notice what grows and how the light falls before you can make a garden.”

BELOW *Paeonia lactiflora* ‘Bowl of Beauty’ and *Alchemilla mollis* grow under mature apple and pear trees.

RIGHT Sturon onions, with cabbages and brussels sprouts in the background, protected by a net supported by hazel poles topped with flowerpots.

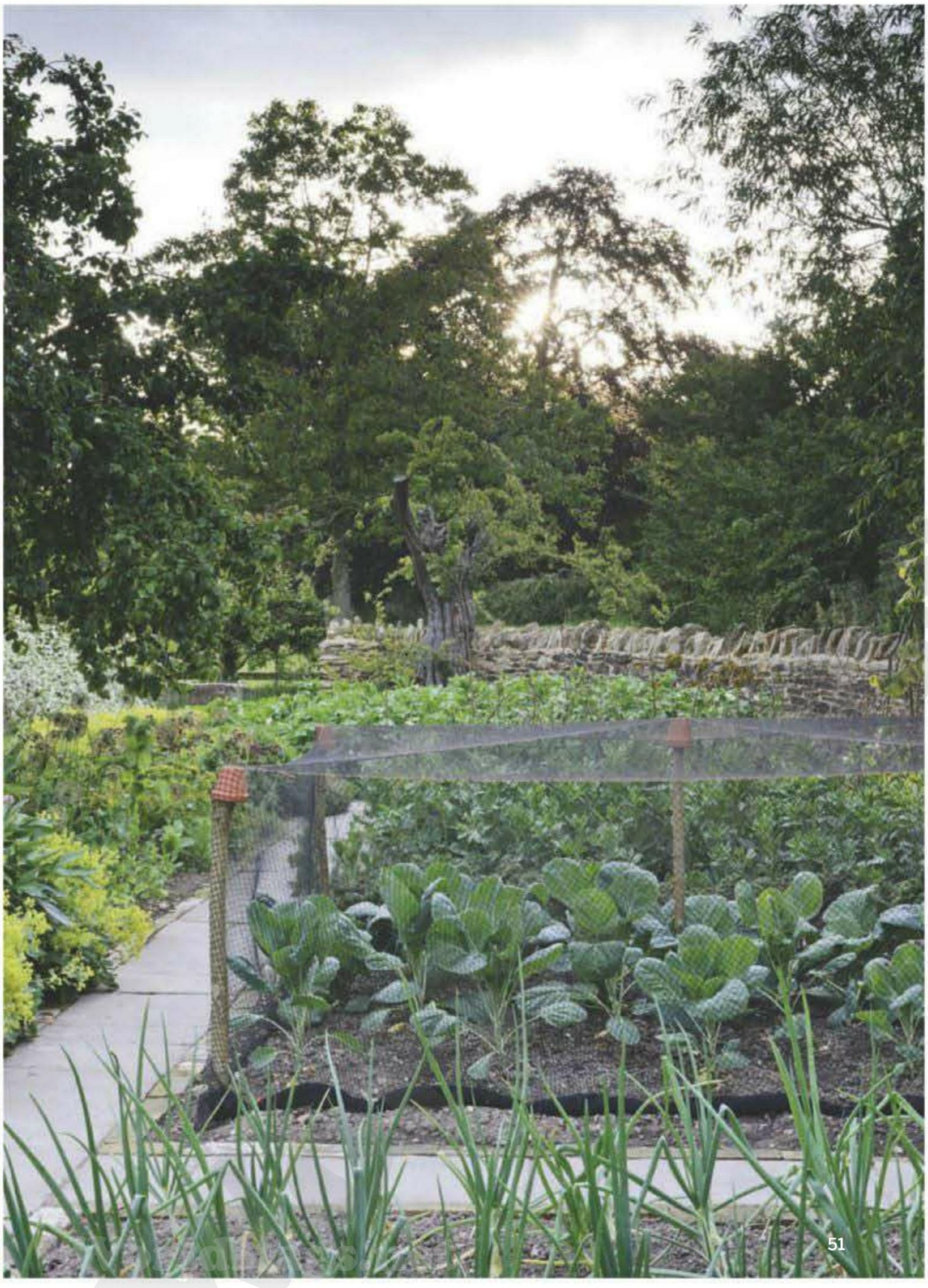
"Chickens roam under fruit trees, partly penned by a hedge of hawthorn and wild rose"

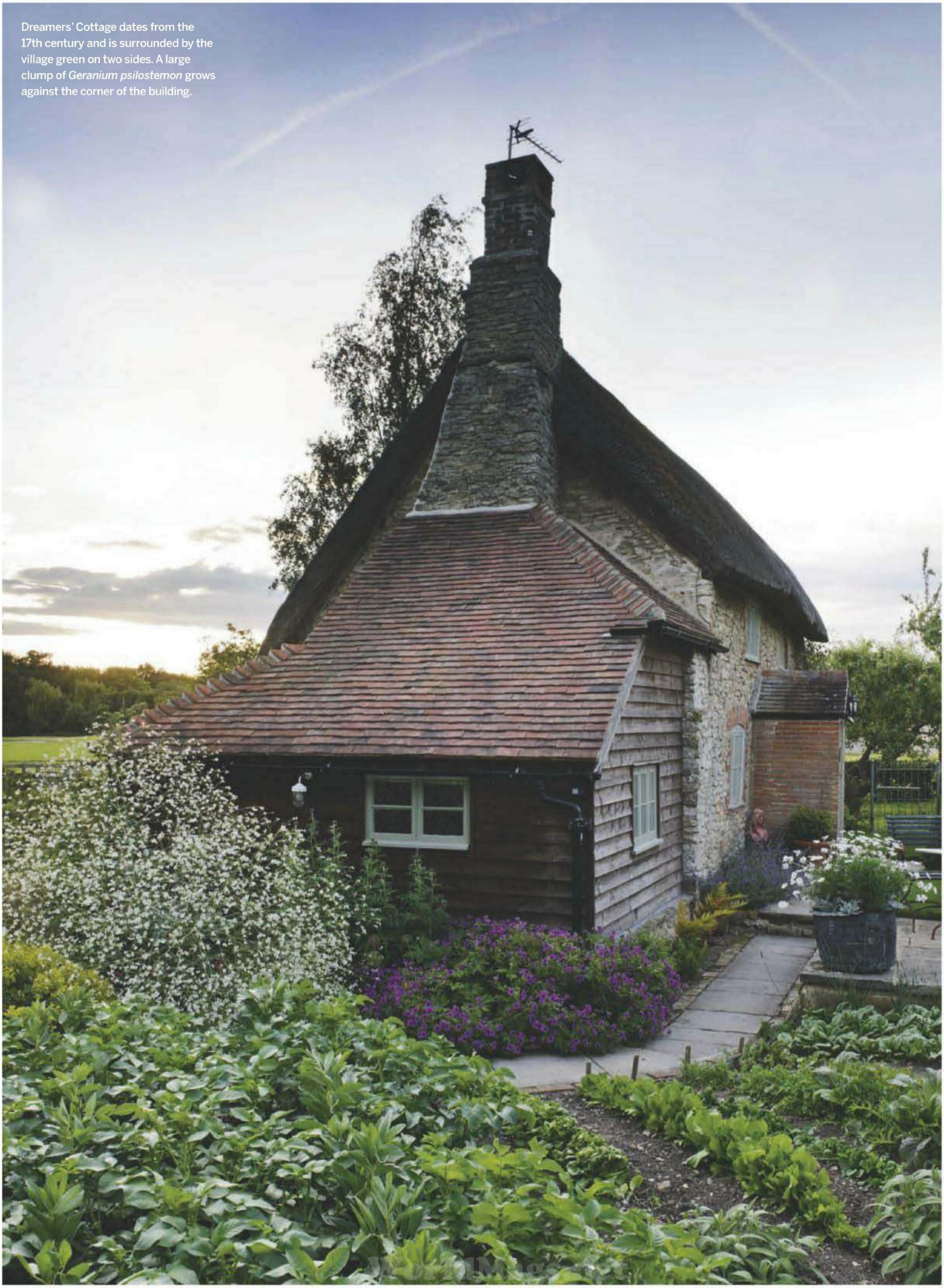
The core of the garden is four large beds, surrounded by paths of reused paving. The choice of what Piers and Louise grow is driven by taste. "No-one can tell you what to grow. You have to do your own trials and grow the varieties you like and that best fit with the way you eat," says Louise. There are three varieties of raspberries, rows of magnificent chard and masses of salads growing cheek by jowl and all looking healthy and inviting.

Beauty and utility

"In a small garden, everything has to work hard," says Louise. Beauty alone is not sufficient to earn a plant a place here: it has to contribute something more. An old apple tree with attractive gnarled branches but with fruit that is "tasteless and doesn't store" will be replaced with a better cultivar. A clump of *Paeonia* 'Bowl of Beauty' in the garden when they arrived has been reduced to make way for other cut flowers. There is no greenhouse so most of the cut flowers are direct-sown annuals, which take up less space than perennials. Louise says she would "rather have a plate of home-grown food than rare and unusual plants." Chickens roam under fruit trees, partly penned by a hedge of hawthorn and wild rose. In a corner ▷

continued on page 54

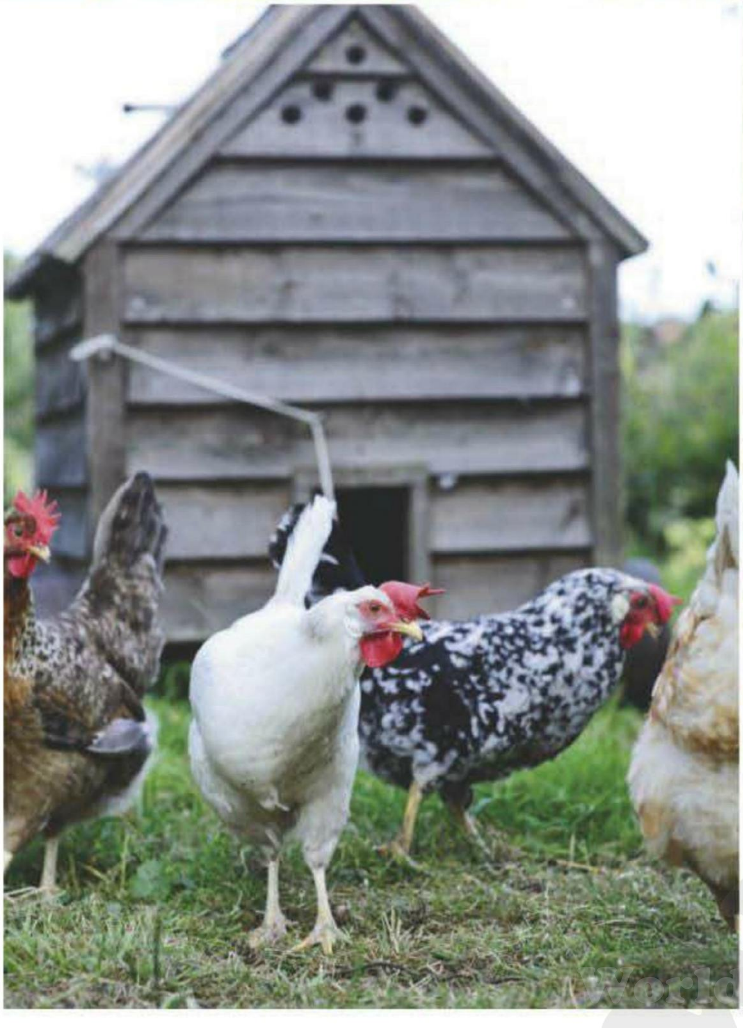




Dreamers' Cottage dates from the 17th century and is surrounded by the village green on two sides. A large clump of *Geranium psilostemon* grows against the corner of the building.

ABOVE *Cerinthe major* 'Purpurascens'.

BELOW **The chickens are now banned from the veg patch after damaging young plants: a cream legbar (brown speckled), a white leghorn and an ancona (black and white).**



ABOVE **Piers restores vintage tools to use and to sell.**

BELOW ***Nigella damascena* (love-in-a-mist).**

▷ of the garden a small group of hazel is grown as a screen, to produce nuts and provide hazel poles for garden structures. The hedge and hazel are good-looking and practical; both embody the spirit of the garden.

This garden is no utilitarian smallholding: art and artistry are everywhere. Pelargoniums in antique pots sit on an elegant jardinière, and a pebble terrace was built by Piers from stones dug up while creating the vegetable beds. Inspired by their commitment to recycling, the couple set up a company, Garden and Wood, to restore and sell old garden equipment and tools. "They feel good and look beautiful but above all they are working tools," Piers says.

The couple have managed to create that rare thing, a garden that it is both beautiful and fruitful. It is a relaxing place that invites you to linger, especially with homemade scones on offer. But the sun is shining and so, for Piers and Louise, there is gardening to be done. □

LEFT The garden has many home-made and reclaimed features. This terrace was built from stones Piers found in the garden, and the table and jardinière are vintage finds.

BELOW The dark flowers of *Astrantia major* 'Hadspen Blood' set off the lime froth of *Alchemilla mollis*.

RIGHT The hazel sticks used as bean poles are grown in the garden.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Piers and Louise (www.gardenandwood.co.uk) will be at the National Forest Wood Fair with their vintage garden equipment. 26-27 August, www.nationalforest.org

6 ideas for sustainable gardening

1 **Use as much recycled material as possible.**
"Our reclaimed cleft oak garden gate is more beautiful than a new one. Auctions and salvage yards are a good source."

2 **Go on gardening and countryside courses.**
"There are lots of hedge-laying courses around the country that will help you to grow beautiful and practical hedges."

3 **Bed paving on sharp sand and don't use cement.**
"Making cement produces carbon dioxide and contributes to air pollution."

4 **Sign up for a water meter.**
"Challenging in a vegetable garden, but ensures you think about the amount of water that you are using. If you are lucky enough to have a well, fit a hand pump to it."

5 **Cheap, simple solutions are often the best.**
"Brassicas are protected from pigeons and butterflies by netting tied over hazel poles topped with terracotta pots."

6 **Sometimes you need to compromise.**
"After seeing the damage they do to plants, Piers and Louise now limit their chickens to a large area under the fruit trees."

Verbascum

Colourful perennials or biennials with handsome foliage and tall flower spikes that are attractive to bees

WORDS **VAL BOURNE**

In brief

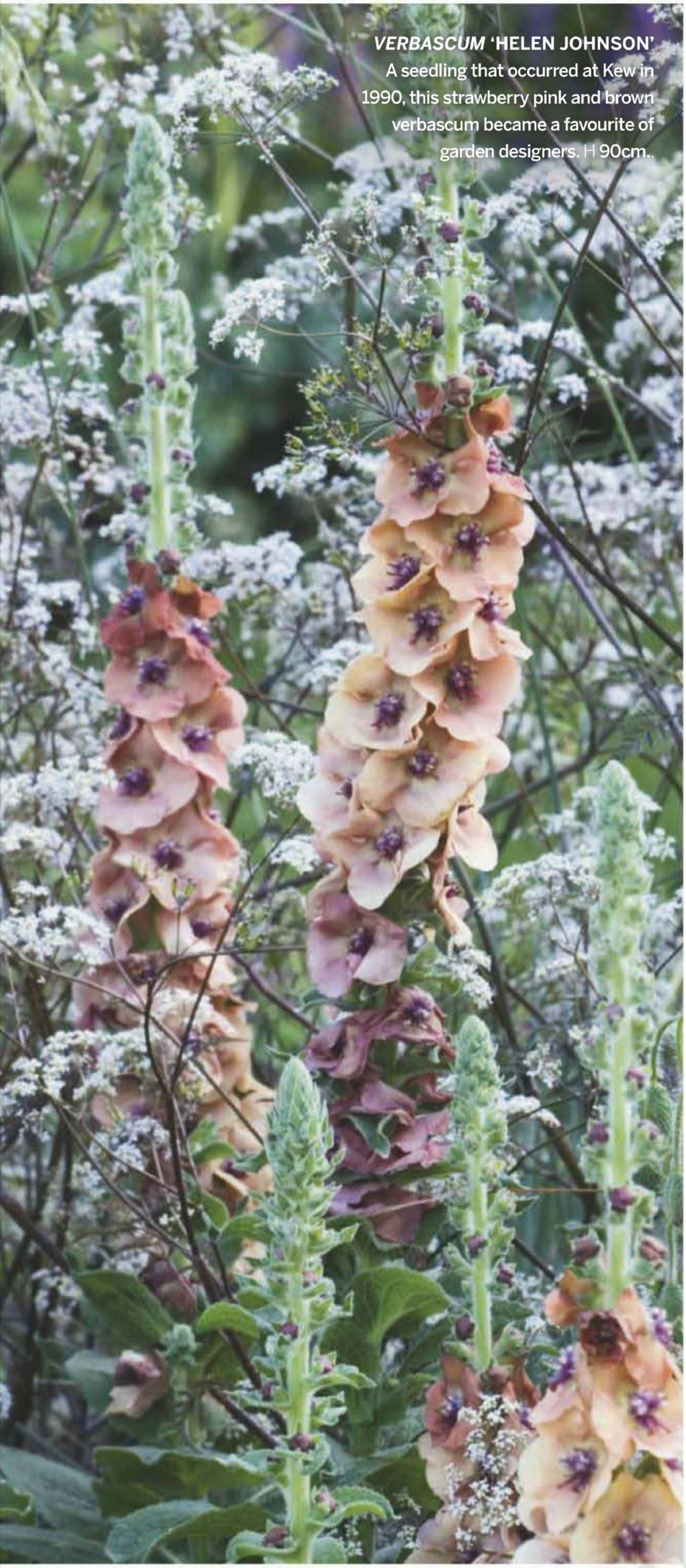
WHAT **A varied group of biennials, long-lived perennials and short-lived perennials producing insect-friendly spikes of flowers.**

ORIGINS **250 species, mostly native to Europe and Turkey, all found on poorer, disturbed soil. They are members of the *Scrophulariaceae* family.**

SEASON **Flowering between May and September.**

SIZE **Heights ranging from 30cm to 2m or more. An upright habit, although some rosettes can be up to 90 cm wide.**

CONDITIONS **All enjoy a sunny, open site with good drainage – excellent for drier gardens. Many have deep tap roots, allowing them to suck up water in drought conditions.**



***VERBASCUM* 'HELEN JOHNSON'**
A seedling that occurred at Kew in 1990, this strawberry pink and brown verbascum became a favourite of garden designers. H 90cm..

FIONA MCLEOD / GAP PHOTOS

Val Bourne is an award-winning author who gardens organically at Spring Cottage in the Cotswolds. She serves on two RHS panels – perennials and dahlias.

Any plant that stretches up to heaven to provide clean vertical lines is always welcome in borders that inevitably rely on the mounds and curves created by most herbaceous plants. The herbaceous verbascums provide a fine silhouette, linking sky to heaven, and they can also deliver a handsome rosette of foliage that endures throughout winter too.

The five-petalled flowers, which come in subtle and unusual shades such as sorbet-white, zingy citrus-lemon, toffee-caramel, strawberry-pink or violet-purple, are bee and hoverfly friendly. Often their welcoming saucers are loosely blotched and lashed at the centre with berry shades of raspberry or blackberry. This dark middle flatters the purples, blues and pinks of summer planting. When winter arrives, some verbascums die wonderfully well too, their seedheads and stems blackening to create a strong silhouette. Aaron's rod, an upright poker suitable for a plot with a wilder feel, is one of the common names for great mullein or *Verbascum thapsus*, one of five British natives. Others, like *V. bombyciferum,* turn into flowing sea monsters as their multi-stemmed arms sway in the winter wind. Beth Chatto uses this to great effect in her gravel garden of silvers.

The verbascums with the most eye appeal tend to be named hybrids involving the violet-flowered *V. phoeniceum.* The first one to grab the public's attention was *V.* 'Helen Johnson' (pictured on the left) a seedling that occurred at Kew in 1990. This strawberry pink, with brown overtones, became a vogue plant for garden designers. It gave rise to at least two sports (flowering shoots that appear in another colour) that are worth growing: *V.* 'Cherry Helen' (page 61), a cherry-red to pink, and *V.* 'Megan's Mauve' (discovered by Gavin Erith at Howards Nursery in Norfolk in 1998).

Several strains have been deliberately bred too, including the Breckland hybrids bred by Patricia Cooper in Norfolk. Vic Johnstone and Claire Wilson from Whitchurch, previously Plant Heritage collection holders, continue to breed many. Their introductions include ▷

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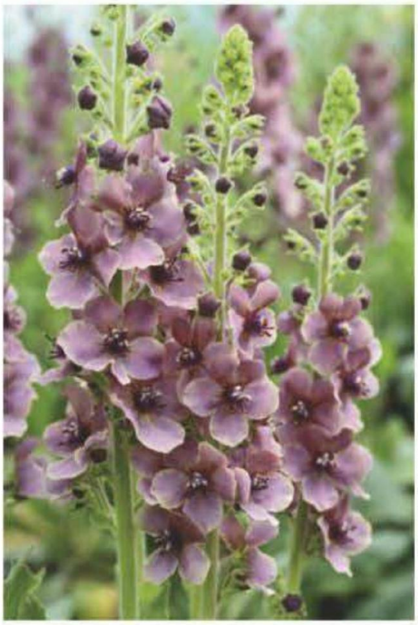
▷ the pale-pink *V.* 'Merlin' (pictured right) that has finely rimmed pink petals and *V.* 'Clementine' (facing page) – my personal favourite. This has radiant sunset-orange flowers feathered with purple stamens. Launched at the 2003 Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, this is widely available and seems more perennial than many. Also look out for bright-yellow *V.* 'Tropic Sun' and orange-brown *V.* 'Tropic Spice', also from Vic Johnstone and Claire Wilson. In 2011 Thompson and Morgan launched *V.* 'Blue Lagoon' (page 63) at the Chelsea Flower Show, winning third place in Plant of the Year. It is the bluest verbascum so far. Most of these hybrids are short in stature, around 90cm or so.

Verbascum hybrids tend to be sterile which means that they never set seed despite the attention of pollinators. They have to be raised either by root cuttings from dormant plants or through costly micropropagation. Although this is a chore for nurseries, being sterile is a bonus for the gardener because sterile plants flower on and on in hope of pollination, giving months of colour rather than a short flush. The downside is that these verbascums tend to be short-lived. Cutting spent flowering spikes to the ground in August can promote a fuller rosette, increasing their chances of survival from year to year.

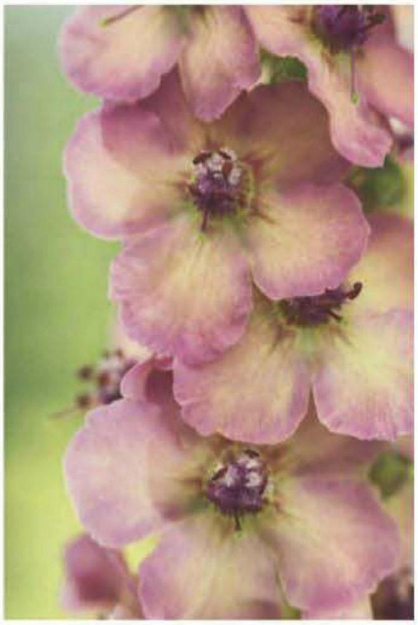
The longest lived verbascum of all is *V. chaixii* 'Album'. This delivers a rosette of grey-green crinkled foliage and several slender spikes of small white flowers liberally blotched in damson-purple. These marry well with sultry roses, but in dry summers flowering can be later.

I also use a May-flowering airy verbascum with tiny wands of violet-purple flowers – *V. phoeniceum* 'Violetta' (page 62). This endures for me from year to year, although gardeners with heavier ground can lose it. Thankfully it is easily raised from seed. Sow in April and it will flower in the following year. It often graces gardens at Chelsea Flower Show and designer Andy Sturgeon in particular seems to love it. □

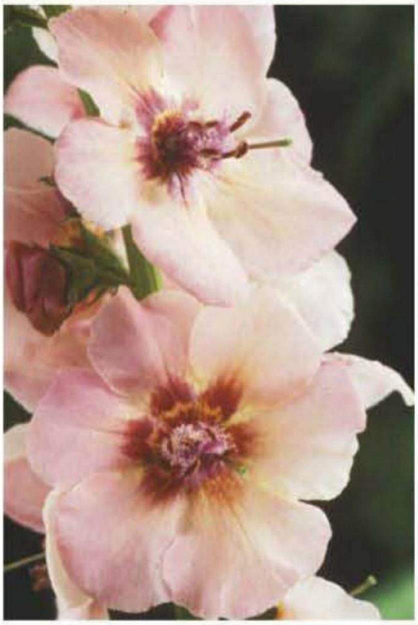
• Val Bourne's choice of favourites ▷ continues over the next six pages.


MAXINE ADCOCK / GAP PHOTOS

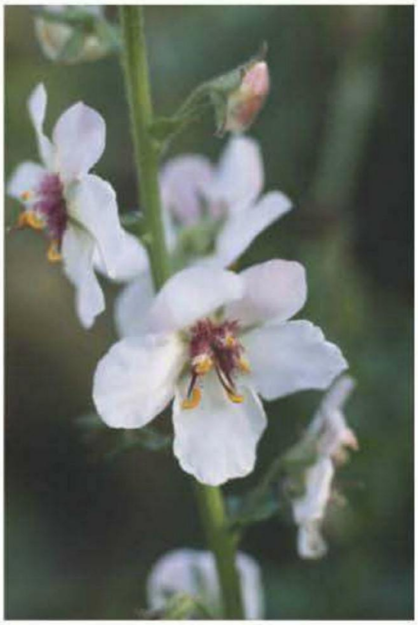
***VERBASCUM* 'MERLIN'**
A rose-madder verbascum with pink to lavender flowers, finely edged in brown. Bred by Vic Johnstone and Claire Wilson, it did well in 2007-2008 RHS trials. H 90cm.


NHPA / SUPERSTOCK

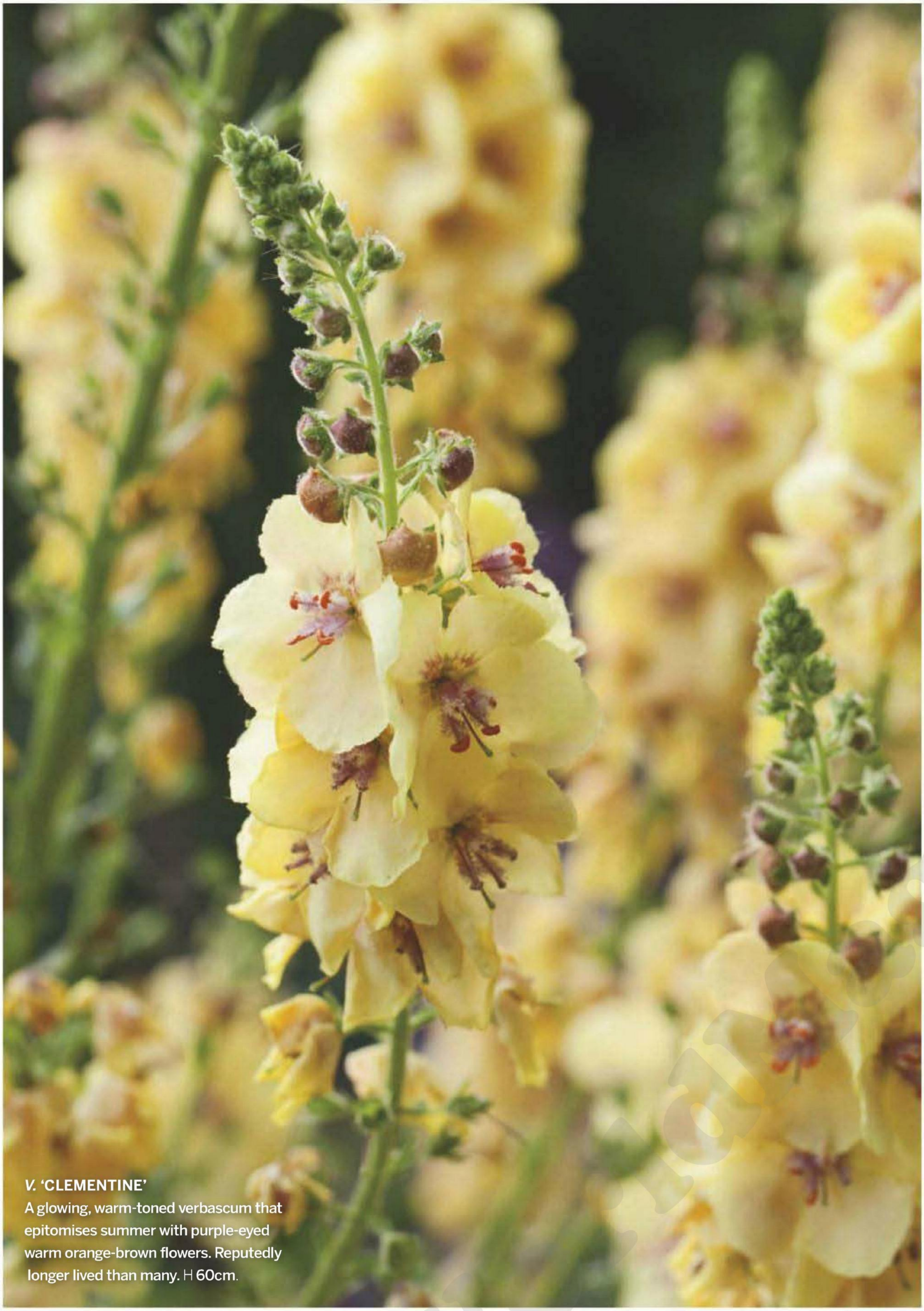
***V.* 'JUNE JOHNSON'**
Copper-orange flowers and grey-green foliage make this 1990s verbascum a subtle addition to the garden (although this one can be hard to find). H 90cm.


CHRIS BURROWS / GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES

***V.* (COTSWOLD GROUP) 'ROYAL HIGHLAND'**
First shown at The Royal Highland Show and similar in colouring to *V.* 'Helen Johnson', although a touch more apricot-pink. H 90cm.

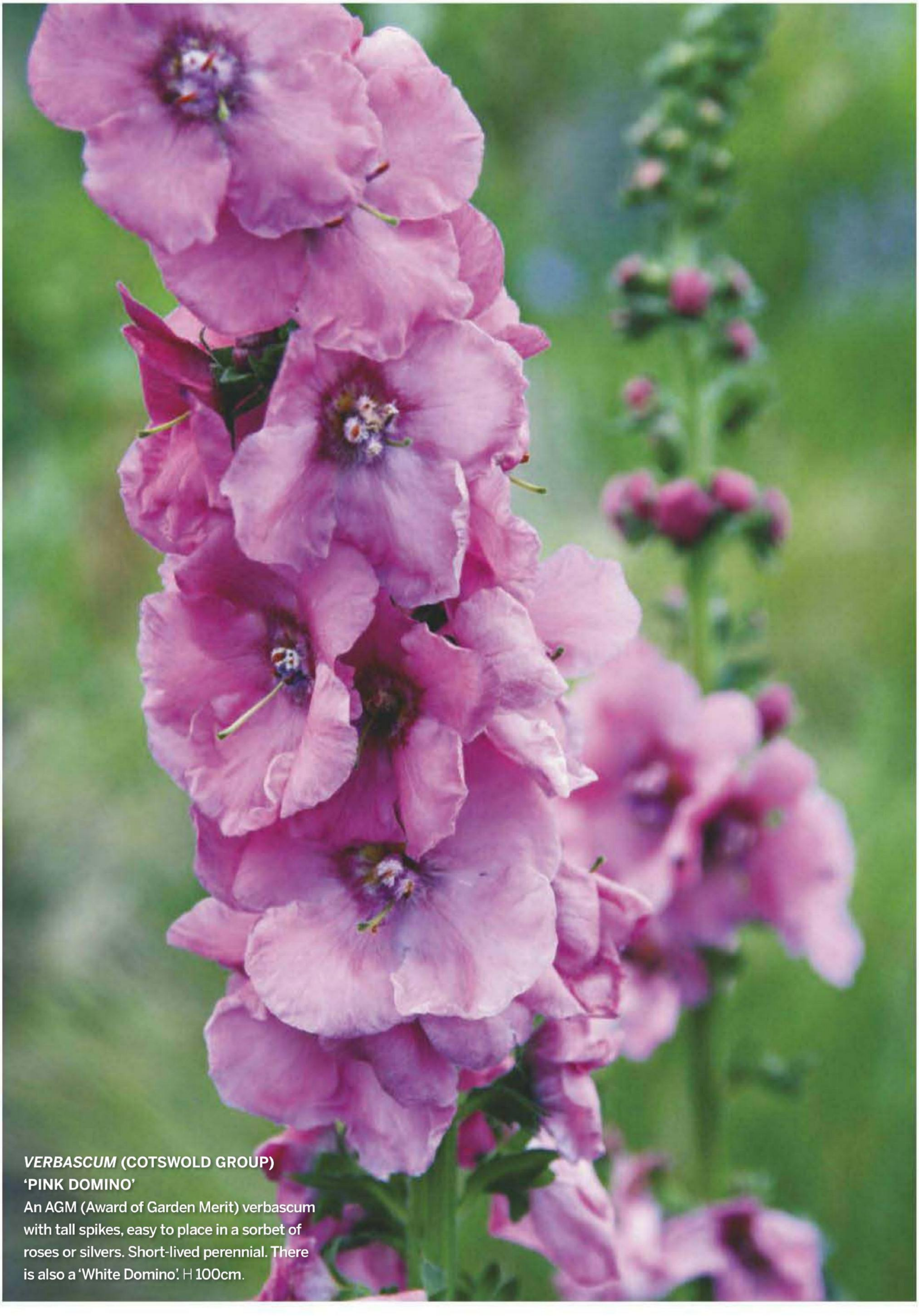

SABINA RUBER / GAP PHOTOS

V. BLATTARIA* F. *ALBIFLORUM
Several stems of white flowers smudged in smoky damson-plum, studded with golden stamens. Light, airy and largely biennial. Best in dry gardens or it can flop. H 120cm.



V. 'CLEMENTINE'
A glowing, warm-toned verbascum that epitomises summer with purple-eyed warm orange-brown flowers. Reputedly longer lived than many. H 60cm.

MMGI / MARIANNE MAJERUS

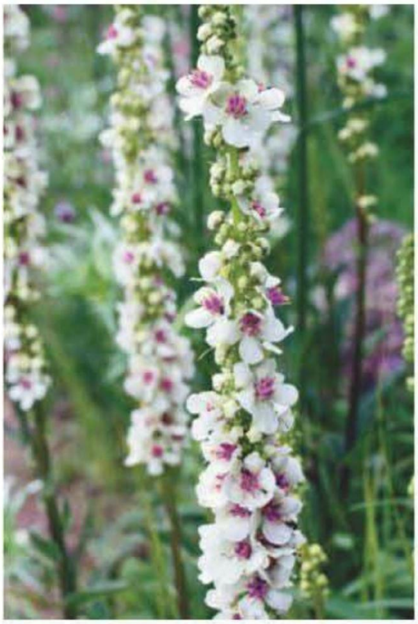


***VERBASCUM* (COTSWOLD GROUP) 'PINK DOMINO'**

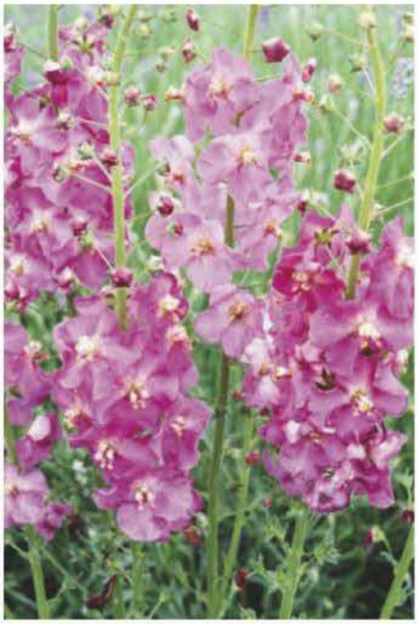
An AGM (Award of Garden Merit) verbascum with tall spikes, easy to place in a sorbet of roses or silvers. Short-lived perennial. There is also a 'White Domino'. H 100cm.

MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAPPHOTOS

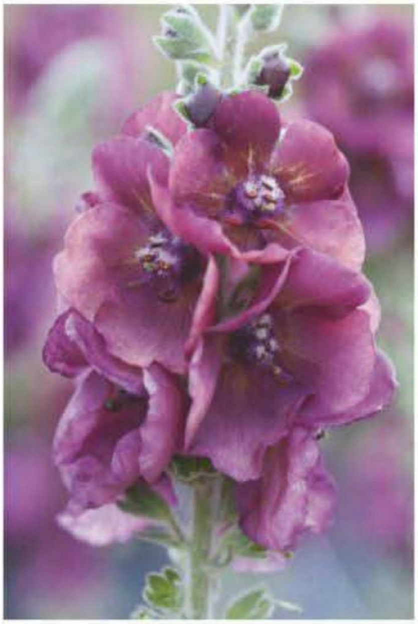
> *"If you remove flowering spikes your plants often live longer. However the winter silhouettes of taller verbascums can be spectacular"*


MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY

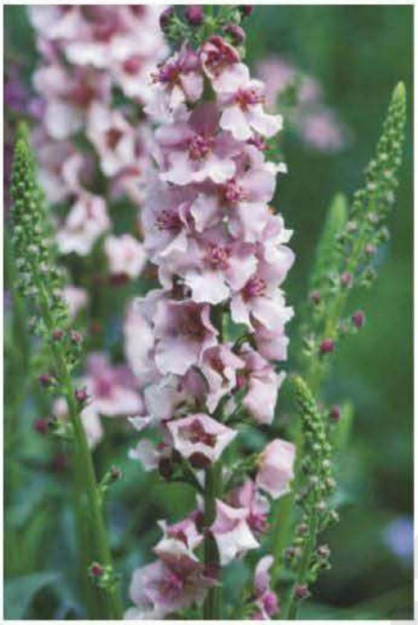
V. *CHAIXII* 'ALBUM'
Mauve-eyed small white flowers tightly held on spires. Good with dark roses and traditional summer herbaceous plants. Truly perennial and pretty. AGM. H 120cm.


LEE THOMAS / GARDENWORLDIMAGES.COM

V. *PHOENICEUM* 'ROSETTA'
Long wands of flowers above a rosette of leaves. Seeds freely. May flowering – if deadheaded may re-bloom in autumn. Easy to grow from seed. H 40cm-60cm.


LIZ EVERY / GARDENWORLDIMAGES.COM

V. 'CHERRY HELEN'
This is a sport from 'Helen Johnson' that produced cherry-pink flowers gently washed in warm brown. H 90cm.


ROB WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS

V. 'VALERIE GRACE'
A pretty verbascum with pink flowers and a darker plum-centre, just showing a touch of orange. Difficult to acquire. H 90cm.

Growing verbascums from seed

Verbascum strains and species often set copious amounts of seeds so you may want to remove the seedheads to prevent unwanted seedlings. If you do remove the flowering spikes your plants often live longer. However the winter silhouettes of taller verbascums can be spectacular in the right setting.

Commercially available packets of verbascum are easy to find. If saving seeds from the garden, harvest on warm days at midday and cut the seedhead into manageable lengths. Store the seeds somewhere cool and dry. Sow in April to May in warm conditions (roughly 15°-18°C) in trays of seed compost. Press the seeds into the damp compost. Move into shade as hot conditions and high temperatures stop germination and halt growth. Germination will take between 14 and 30 days.

Once the seedlings are large enough to prick out (with two proper leaves) transplant them into 7.5cm pots of John Innes No 1 compost. Grow on in cool conditions (around 15°C) until the roots reach the bottom of the pot. If in doubt, upend carefully and look at the root ball. Plant them young before the tap root develops. Either plant out into final positions once large enough, watering regularly until the autumn rains come, or plant at the beginning of September.

If the strong tap root on a verbascum gets disturbed it fails, so pot-grown plants from a garden centre should be as young as possible. If you do succumb and buy one in full flower, plant it extremely carefully and nurture it well through its first growing season, particularly if it's been grown in peaty compost.

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Taking root cuttings

All verbascums can be propagated from root cuttings taken between late autumn and March. Lift your plant and snip away two or three sections of root close to the crown. Remove only one-third of the root system or less and replant the original straight away.

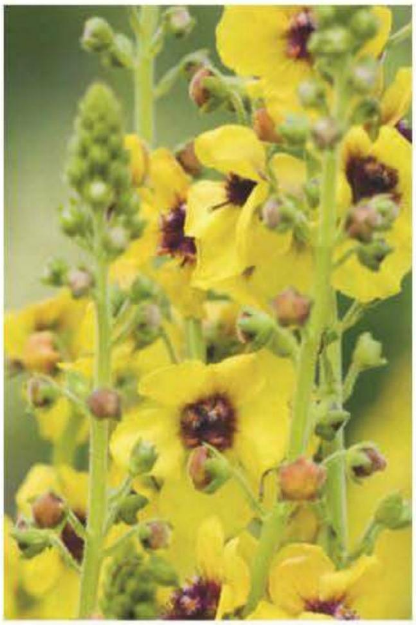
Wash the roots and remove any fibrous lateral growth. Cut each into 5-10cm lengths making a horizontal cut at the upper end and an angled cut at the lower. The larger surface area of the angled cut helps the plant develop roots and tells you which end is which. Fill pots with equal parts seed compost and gritty sand or perlite. Insert each cutting so that the horizontal cut surface is just below the surface, about 6cm apart. Top dress with 1cm of grit. Water lightly and place in a cold frame. Pot up once true leaves develop: this can take three months or more. Grow on and plant out once large enough.

Pests and diseases

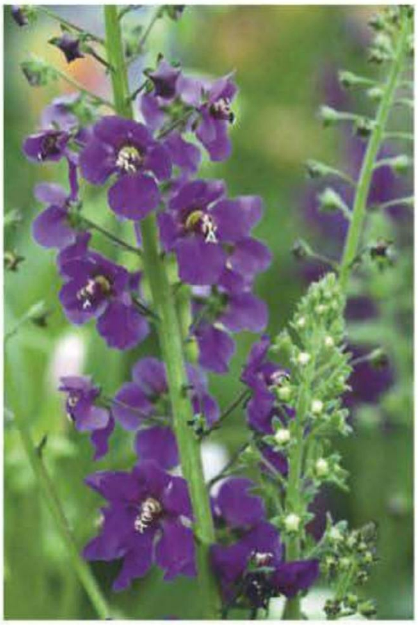
Mullein moths can eat foliage in summer and they do pupate close to the rosette in winter. Pick them off if they offend you.

Where to buy

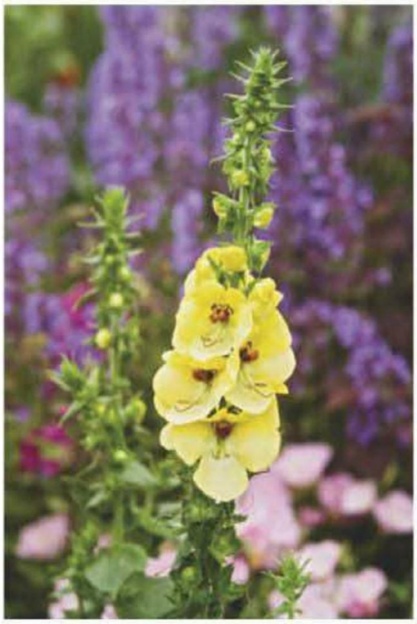
- **Barnsdale Gardens**
The Avenue, Exton, Oakham,
Rutland LE15 8AH. Tel 01572 813200,
www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk
- **Cotswold Garden Flowers**
Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham,
Worcestershire WR11 7EZ.
Tel 01386 422829, www.cgf.net
- **Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants**
Priory Lane Nursery, Freefolk Priors,
Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7NJ.
Tel 01256 896533,
www.hardys-plants.co.uk


RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS

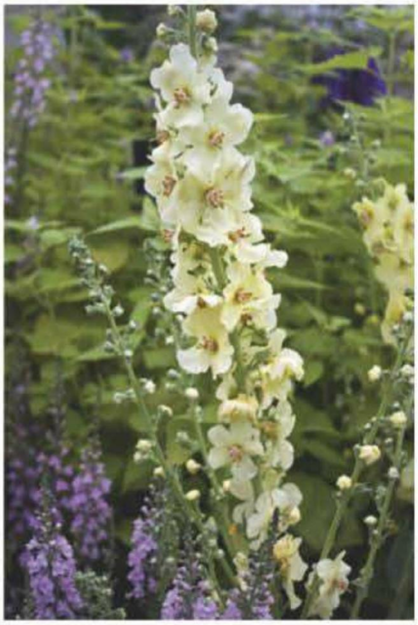
***VERBASCUM* (COTSWOLD GROUP) 'COTSWOLD QUEEN'**
The Cotswold Group was developed in the 1930s. This yellow is rather brash, alternatively *V.* 'Cotswold Beauty' is a soft apricot. H 120cm.


LIZ EDDISON / THE GARDEN COLLECTION

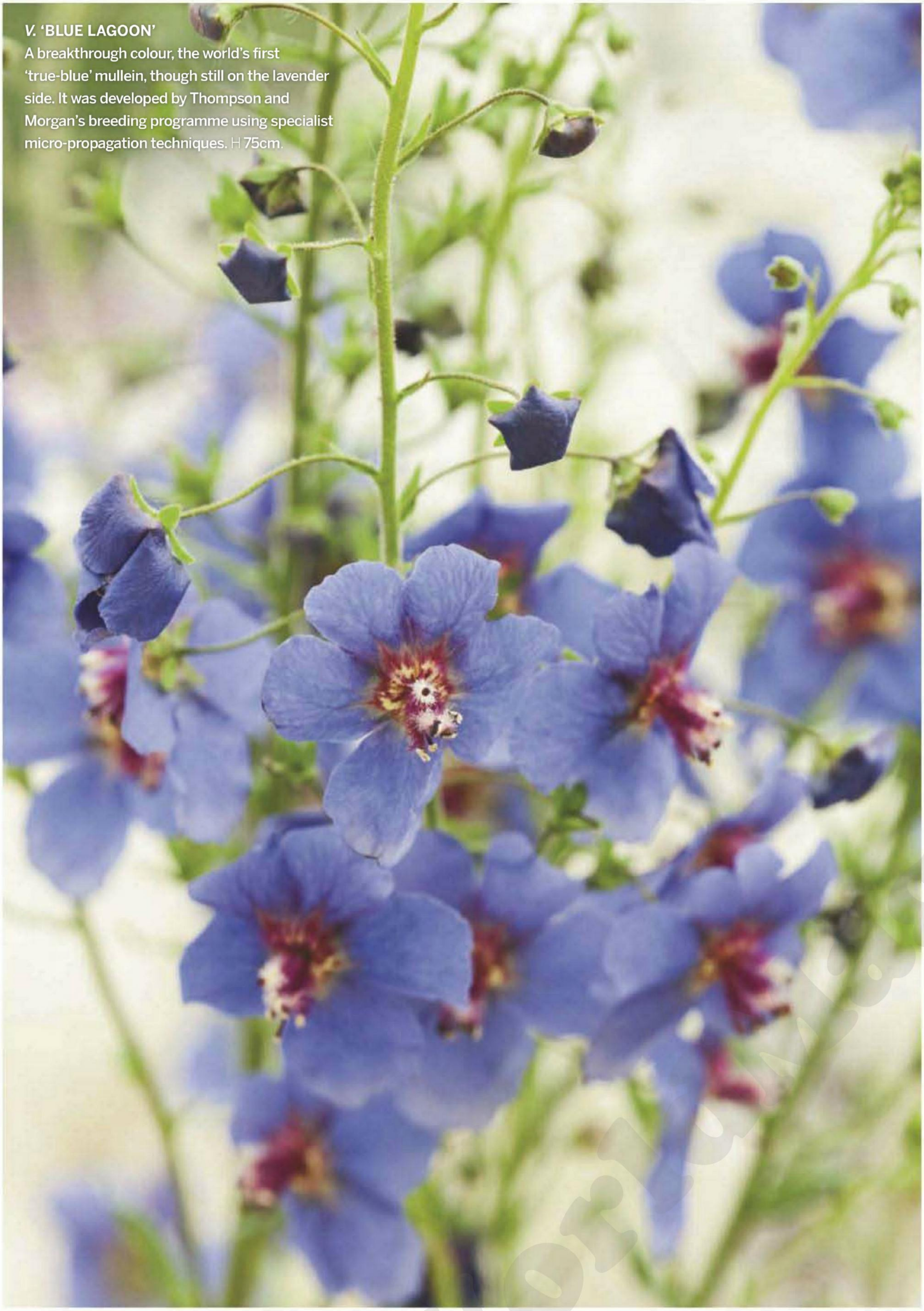
***V. PHOENICEUM* 'VIOLETTA'**
Named form of delicate May-flowering purple mullein. Long wands of flowers. If deadheaded often re-blooms in autumn. Easy from seed. Introduced by Jelitto in 1999. H 40cm-60cm.


PAUL DEBOIS / GAP PHOTOS

V. CRETICUM
Self-seeding biennial with chocolate-eyed, yellow, scented flowers. Available from Derry Watkin's Special Plants. Also sold as 'Cotswold King'. Can be invasive. H 90cm or more.


JENNY LILLY / GAP PHOTOS

***V.* (COTSWOLD GROUP) 'GAINSBOROUGH'**
Useful late summer flowerer with stunning grey foliage. Looks ghostly at night and almost certainly moth pollinated. Needs sharp drainage to be perennial. AGM. H 120cm.



V. 'BLUE LAGOON'
A breakthrough colour, the world's first 'true-blue' mullein, though still on the lavender side. It was developed by Thompson and Morgan's breeding programme using specialist micro-propagation techniques. H 75cm.

MMGI / MARIANNE MAJERUS

Linda Phillips

Meet the director of Roots and Shoots, the charity that provides horticultural training to disadvantaged teenagers in London

WORDS ANNE JENNINGS PHOTOGRAPH CHARLIE HOPKINSON

When Linda Phillips accepted a job to set up a horticultural charity in 1981, she had no reason to expect the role would last for more than the three years for which funding had been secured. Thirty years later, with a transformed site, a modern teaching facility and an outstanding OFSTED report, Linda's work with disadvantaged young people at Roots and Shoots was formally recognised with an MBE in the 2012 New Year Honours List.

Nestled behind a collection of postwar apartment blocks in London SE11, the charity's one-acre site is a wildlife haven and plant nursery that bears little resemblance to the ex-civil defence plot that Linda first visited. Rough grass, concrete and wire mesh remained as a legacy from the war, and the soil was contaminated with oil and other industrial waste.

> *"The charity's one-acre site is a wildlife haven that bears little resemblance to the ex-civil defence plot that Linda visited 30 years ago"*

Linda's challenge was to use this land to provide horticultural training to disadvantaged youngsters aged 16 to 19. Her initial intake of four trainees has risen to 33 each year, and following a £1.5m fundraising campaign a wooden shed was replaced by the eco-build education block in 2005. The gardens have become a valued community resource enjoyed by local people.

Much of Linda's time is spent fundraising and dealing with endless bureaucracy, but her roots are firmly embedded in horticulture, for which she has a passion and an impressive craft-based training. After leaving school at 16, Linda initially trained in floristry and then moved on to a Royal Parks Apprenticeship in 1971. She was mentored by Geoff Collins, former head gardener of Inverewe and a great plantsman who was an inspiration to her. Linda worked as his assistant at the Stud Nursery at Hampton Court for six years. Geoff encouraged her to apply to study at Kew Gardens. She was accepted as one of 20 trainees out of 400 applicants for the Kew Diploma, which she studied from 1978 to 1981.

By the time she left Kew, Linda had developed a keen interest in what was at the time referred to as Decorative Horticulture and decided to explore internal landscaping as a profession. She soon knew this work was not for her as she was always, in her own words, "bored witless", but during the same period stumbled across a project where people with learning difficulties were being trained in horticulture. She quickly realised that this work would combine her two passions – people and plants – and soon after saw the Roots and Shoots post advertised.

The list of awards and accolades awarded over the years is testimony to Linda's commitment to the organisation and to horticulture. In 2011 alone, the centre's wildlife garden received an Award of Excellence from UNESCO and a London Spade Award from the Metropolitan Gardens Association for horticultural excellence and environmental education, while the OFSTED report was glowing. However, none of this secures the charity's future and Linda has yet to find funding for her own role for the next three to five years, as well as worrying about how she can find the money to refurbish the dilapidated greenhouse.

She is also concerned about the trainees. "We see youngsters coming here who can't read or write or even hold a pencil, and much of our work is to provide core numeracy and literacy skills. This reduces the time we can spend working outside with them." Government funds are provided for each student, but nevertheless Linda has to find ways to supplement this funding, such as a recently secured grant for an additional teacher.

When asked about the future, Linda clearly sees an ongoing commitment to Roots and Shoots but is also interested in horticultural training in a wider sense. She, like many fellow professionals, has concern about the availability of first-class training for the next generation of professional gardeners and she is interested in becoming more involved in this issue.

And how does Linda spend her time when she's not at work? It comes as no surprise to find that she gardens, either propagating plants for the charity in her own greenhouse or working on the allotment that she and her husband have worked for 14 years, and where they were married in a Buddhist ceremony in 2007. Linda is woman with horticulture at her heart in every sense.

- www.rootsandshoots.org.uk

NEXT MONTH Sarah Price, who won gold with *The Telegraph* garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2012

The glorious colour of a *country garden*

The owners of Town Place have transformed their garden with strong colours and shapes as well as indulging their passion for roses – they had 400 at the last count

WORDS **STEPHANIE DONALDSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **ABIGAIL REX**

In brief

NAME Town Place.
WHAT Country garden with formal layout.
WHERE Close to Haywards Heath in West Sussex.
SIZE Three and a half acres.
CONDITIONS Exposed position.
SOIL Sandstone ridge and clay.
SPECIAL FEATURES Topiary and hedges, roses, colour-themed herbaceous borders.
GARDEN PLAN See page 71.

LEFT In the Herb Garden four main beds, edged with box, are filled with a mixture of cottage garden plants and herbs.

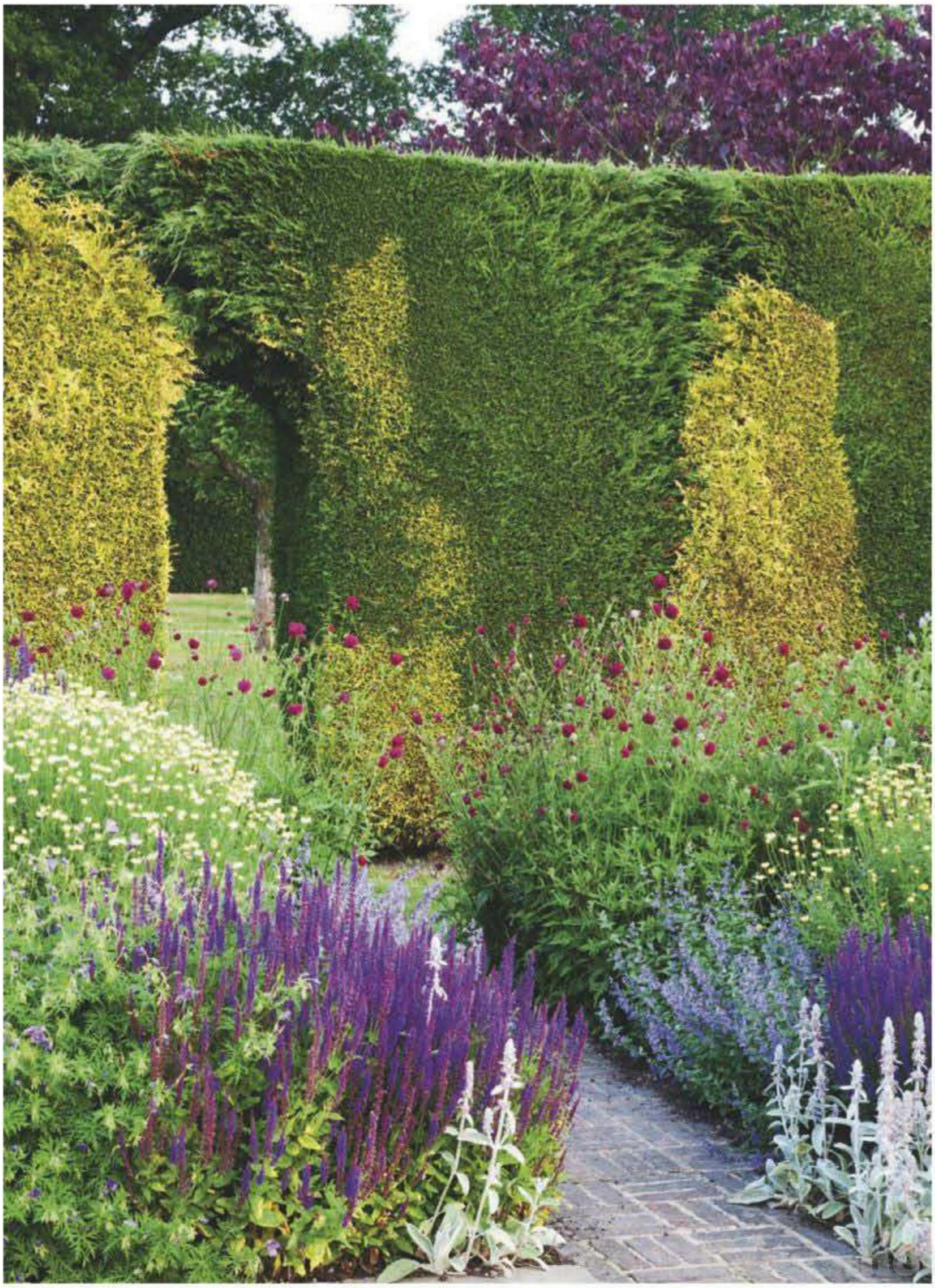
BELOW The view past a border featuring *Macleaya* x *kewensis* and *Knautia macedonica* towards Town Place, a grade II-listed, 17th-century timber-framed farmhouse.

Before Anthony and Maggie McGrath bought Town Place in 1990 they had been searching the area for a modern house with a big garden, but had gradually come to realise that such a property didn't exist. Adjusting their requirements somewhat, they viewed Town Place. It did have the large garden they were after, but the house was anything but modern, dating from 1650, with records of it as a settlement called 'Toune' all the way back to 1288. The existing garden consisted of a very large expanse of lawn, a shrubbery and a few planted beds. It had potential rather than presence, but this was fine as their intention was to make a garden of their own rather than take on an existing one. "We've been dividing it up ever since," Anthony comments cheerfully. "It does still have a large lawn, but there are a number of distinct areas or gardens surrounding it." This is putting it mildly: in their hands it has grown into a complex and interesting garden.

Their first priority was to work out what it was they wanted to achieve. With this in mind, Maggie went to nearby Plumpton College and completed an RHS Certificate in General Horticulture and a design course. By the following year they felt equipped to embark on their first project, the planting of a hornbeam walk, as well as yew and copper beech hedges to create a series of axes to line up with the house.

LEFT A 'tapestry hedge' of x *Cuprocyparis leylandii* 'Haggerston Grey' and golden *Thuja plicata* 'Zebrina', with drifts of *Knautia macedonica* in front.

BELOW Repeat combinations of yellow *Anthemis tinctoria* and purple *Salvia* x *superba* 'Superba' provide the key colours in the short herbaceous border, which is at its peak in July and August. Height has been introduced with *Cynara cardunculus* and *Cephalaria gigantea* at the back.



"Steps, gates, arches and mown paths lead the visitor from one area to another"

Since then, this energetic couple have generally carried out a garden project a year, some of them breaking new ground, some updating earlier work.

Strong colours and shapes

"Bit by bit over the past 20 years we have created the garden we want," explains Maggie, "a garden full of interest where you can't see everything at once, but where there are long vistas." Anthony adds: "We have made mistakes – there are things we've done that we wouldn't have if we'd known then what we know now."

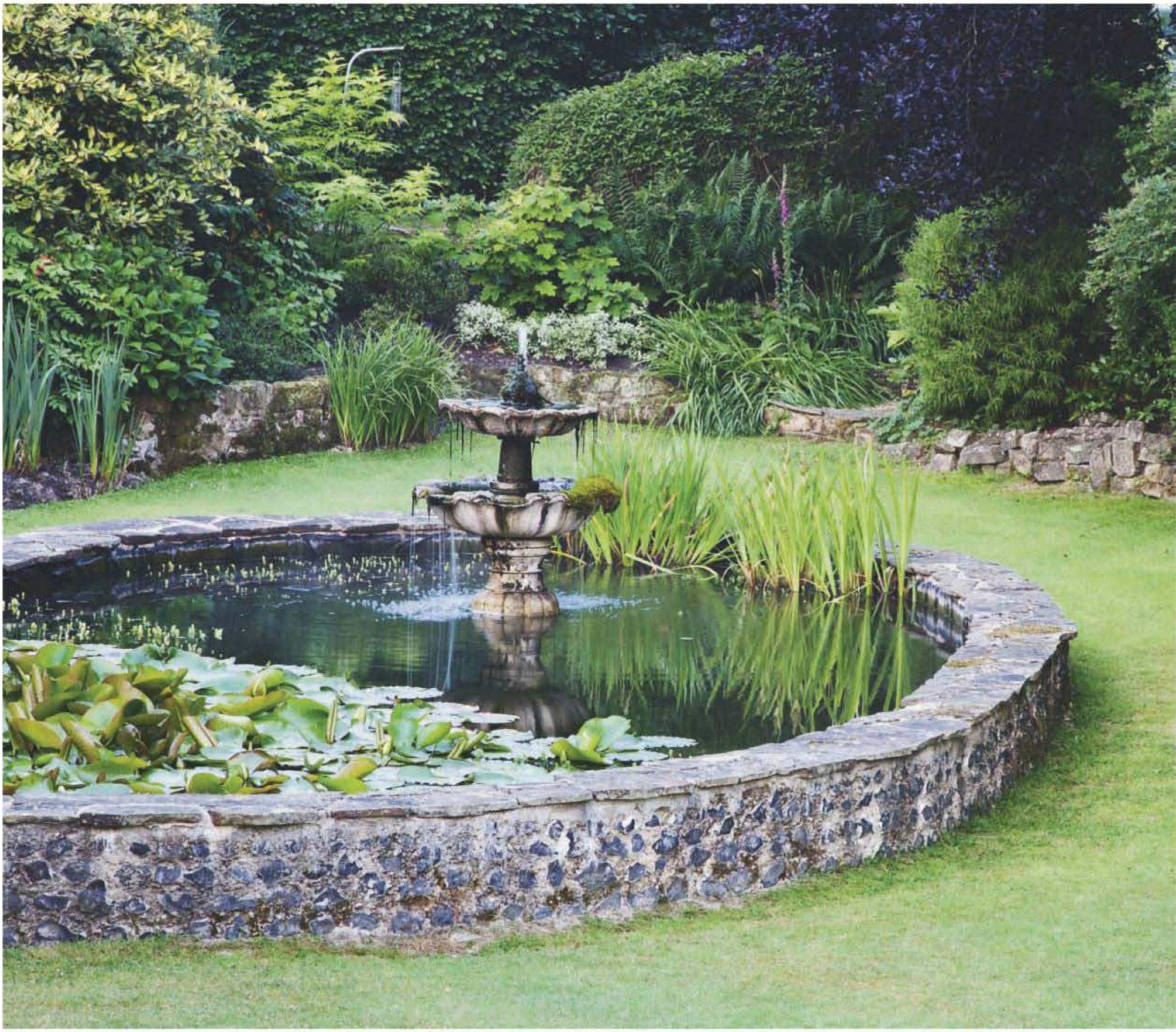
If there are 'mistakes' they are far from evident to the visitor. Town Place is a garden in the tradition of Sissinghurst and Hidcote (both inspirations) where steps, gates, arches and mown paths lead the visitor from one area to another and draw the eye with glimpses of what lies beyond. A pair of generous herbaceous borders, backed by a tapestry hedge, borders one side of the lawn. Strong colours and shapes ensure the planting is not lost against the pattern of the hedge. *Geranium* 'Nimbus' and *Geranium* Patricia (= 'Brempat') combine with *Salvia* x *superba* 'Superba', *Knautia macedonica* and *Anthemis tinctoria*, with *Macleaya* x *kewensis*, cardoons *Cynara cardunculus* and giant scabious *Cephalaria gigantea* providing height. At the far ▷

▷ end of the border an arch in the hedge leads through to the English Rose Garden, which contains more than 400 roses featuring nearly 50 different cultivars. The enclosing hedges trap the rich rose fragrance – an olfactory reward for the time that Maggie spends there involved in the endless task of deadheading. The couple have worked out clearly defined his and hers roles. Maggie looks after the borders, the colour choices, details, design, colour combinations and deadheading. Meanwhile Anthony is in charge of the big picture, the herb garden, the potager and the watering. "We never meet," he says smilingly, "the garden is big enough for us to work quite separately." It makes for an interesting blend of styles with Maggie generally adopting a more formal approach and Anthony less so. His abundant plantings in the potager and the herb garden seem less restrained than Maggie's borders.

Creating a green church

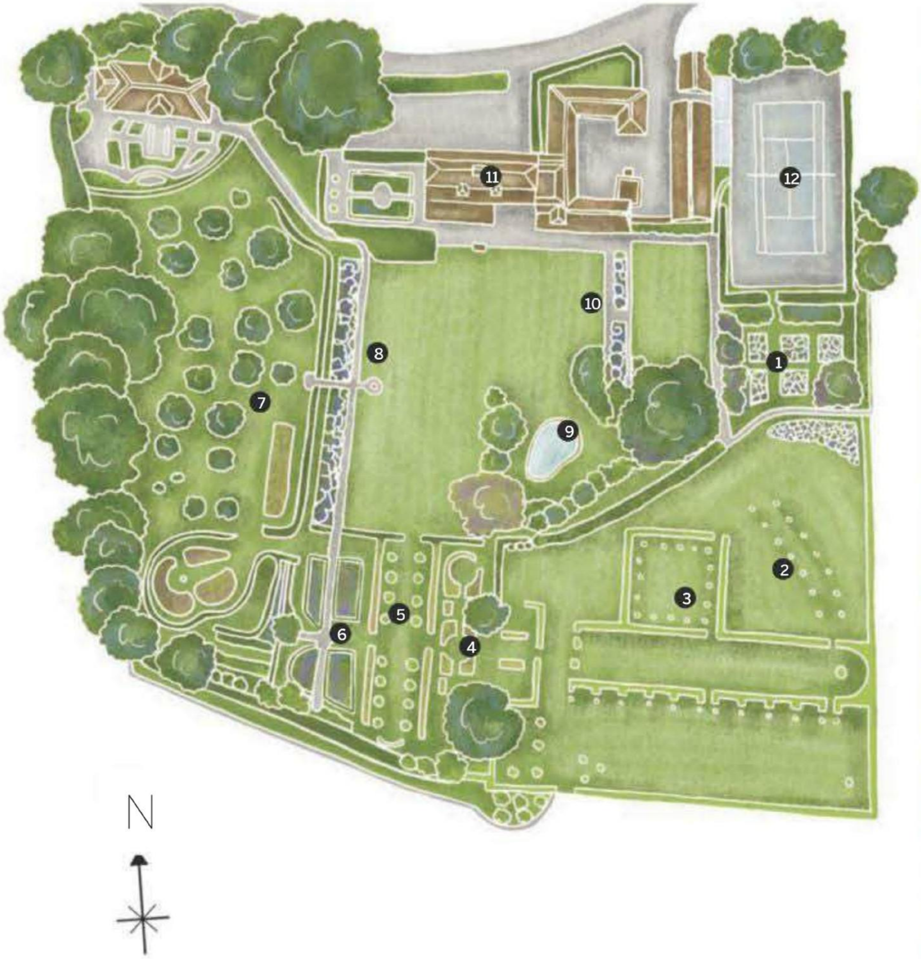
While much of the garden is in the classic country style, the most unusual area has been laid out in a paddock they bought in 2000 and renamed The New Territories. Anthony has been studying medieval art history and while they were pondering how to use the space he made a surprising suggestion to Maggie: "Let's make a church." Taking inspiration from the vast ▷

BELOW The Dell was created on the site of a large farm pond. The current fishpond was built using knapped flints, characteristic of local buildings in West Sussex.



Garden plan

1. Herb garden
2. New territories
3. Ruined priory church
4. Potager
5. Hornbeam walk
6. English rose garden
7. Orchard
8. Long border
9. The dell
10. Short border
11. House
12. Tennis court



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PLAN BY HANNAH MCVICAR

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▷ hornbeam hedges at Le Manoir d'Eyrignac in the Dordogne, they have planted a hornbeam 'ruined priory church' in the Romanesque style, complete with cloisters. Its geometry is severe, but this is softened by the quiet greenness of it all and the varying profiles of the 'walls', sometimes neatly horizontal, sometimes more fragmented to represent fallen stones. It is an effective and thought-provoking counterpoint to the labour intensive garden that adjoins it.

So, in among the watering, the deadheading, the pruning and training, it is good to know that Anthony and Maggie have a place they can retreat to where there are no borders requiring to be staked, herbs to be harvested or roses deadheaded. It would be nice to think that they even manage an occasional rendezvous in their quiet cloisters. ☐

"The couple have worked out clearly defined his and hers roles in the garden"

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Town Place, Ketches Lane, Freshfield, near Sheffield Park, Sussex RH17 7NR
WEBSITE www.townplacegarden.org.uk
OPEN Town Place opens for the National Gardens Scheme on Sundays 1 July and 8 July, from 2pm to 6pm. www.ngs.org.uk

BELOW Climbing the arch at the entrance to the English Rose Garden is *Rosa* 'Madame Isaac Pereire', which welcomes visitors with its beautiful scent. The rose garden has about 400 roses of 47 different cultivars.

9 of Maggie's favourite roses

1 ***Rosa* 'Albertine'**
An excellent old rambler with lots of pink flowers and a strong scent. "This rose was just born to sprawl up the sides of an old house," says Maggie.

2 ***Rosa* Charlotte (= 'Auspoly')**
"A lovely rose. One of my favourite yellows – starts off a soft yellow and gets paler. The habit is good, stands up well and is tidy. Dead-heads very easily."

3 ***Rosa* 'Penelope'**
"One of the first roses that we planted," says Maggie. A hybrid musk that has subtle creamy-pink petals and attractive scent.

4 ***Rosa gallica* 'Versicolor'**
"A romantic old rose. There is a cluster in the herb garden."

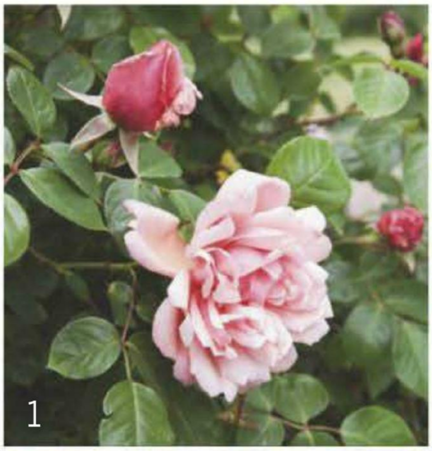
5 ***Rosa* LD Braithwaite (= 'Auscrim')**
"A wonderful colour – one of the best red roses. A bit heavy as a standard, so needs extra support."

6 ***Rosa* Scepter'd Isle (= 'Ausland')**
"Much admired," says Maggie. Goblet shaped blooms and an excellent pink with upright habit.

7 ***Rosa* The Alexandra Rose (= 'Ausday')**
"Like a wild rose in habit. Best planted en-masse. Goes from terracotta buds to flowers that go pale to almost white. Useful in linking yellow and pink roses."

8 ***Rosa* Heritage (= 'Ausblush')**
"Globe-shaped blooms and good scent. Terrific as a standard but really too heavy – needs support."

9 ***Rosa* The Pilgrim (= 'Auswalker')**
"The blooms have a pretty lemon yellow centre – very fresh looking."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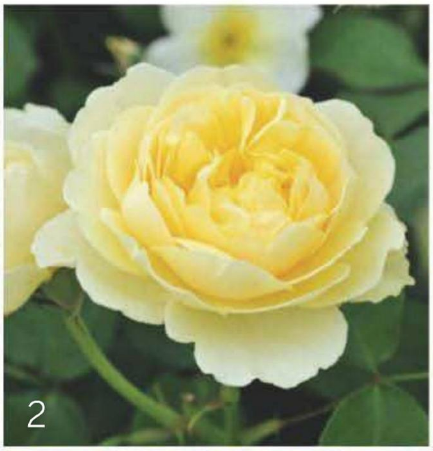
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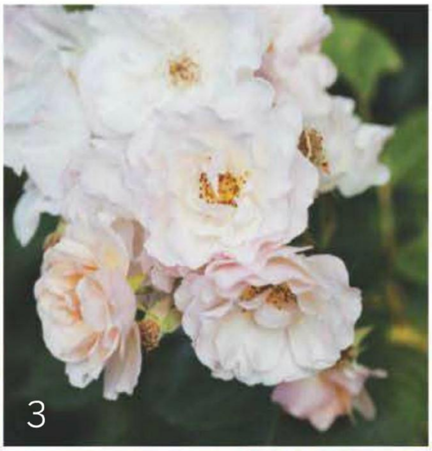
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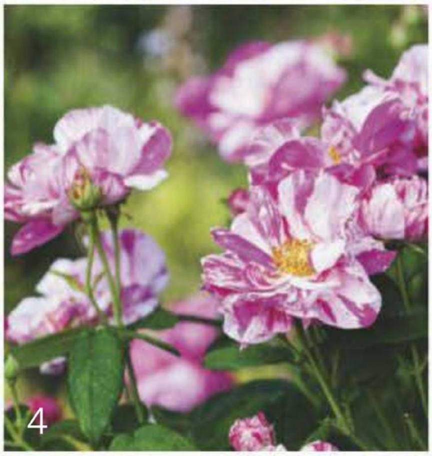
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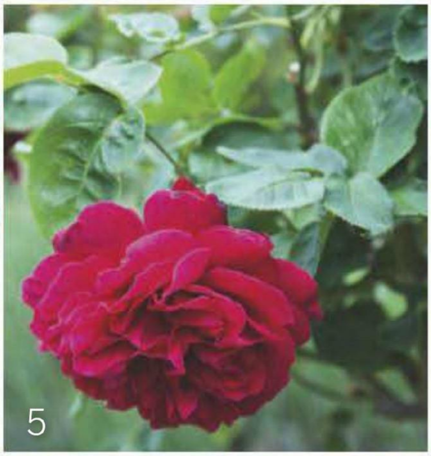
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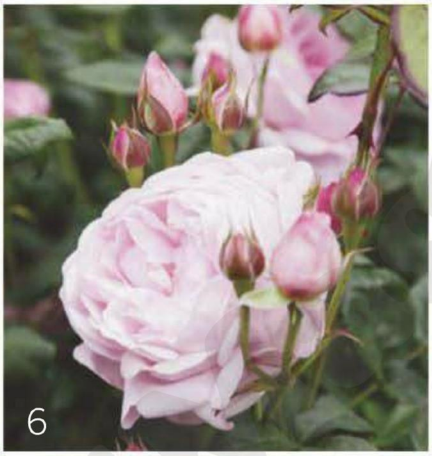
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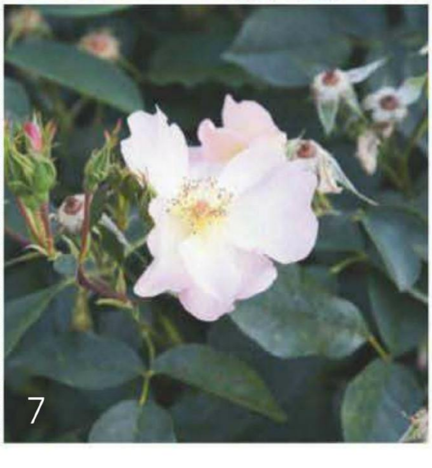
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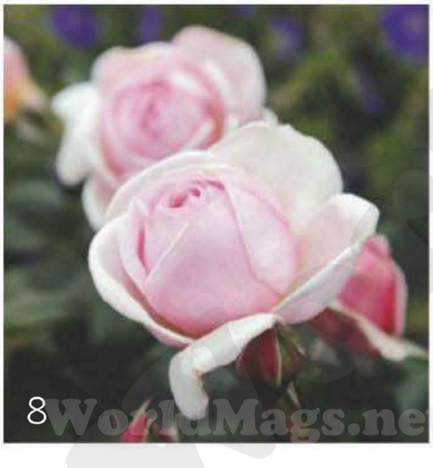
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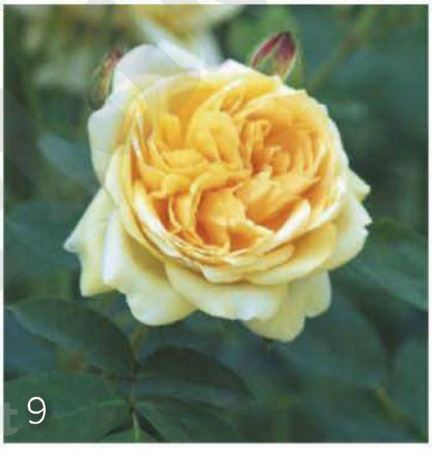
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2 JS SIRA; 7 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES; 8 DAVE ZUBRASKI; ALL GAP PHOTOS

In brief

NAME Trygill Burn Cottage.
WHAT A hilltop garden at 250m above sea level.
WHERE Near the market town of Hexham in Northumberland.
SIZE A quarter of an acre.
SOIL Free draining and lacking in nutrients.
CONDITIONS Windy and exposed on the north-facing brow of a hill.
SPECIAL FEATURES Sweeping views, cottage garden planting, reclaimed garden features.

At the age of five Albert Weir used to crawl through the hedge to the big garden beyond the orchard and smuggle home flowers he'd rescued from the compost heap. He would stage flower shows, putting them in vases on a display bench in one of the farm's old barns. "I didn't know it at the time but I was spotted by the cook who tipped off the head gardener. Instead of being angry, he realised I was keen and invited me into the garden and that kicked off a lifetime's interest in horticulture."

Now in his early sixties, his passion for creating Eden hasn't waned. If anything his retirement as an agricultural conservation officer for the Northumberland National Park has sharpened his appetite for reworking his hilltop garden. Brought up on a farm in Cheshire, a childhood "full of freedom and happiness", he was expected to do a full day at school and then help with farm work and this habit of hard graft has remained. Friends tease him that although his garden is full of inviting benches he is scarcely ever seen taking advantage of one.

Wild flowers

His love of flowers, particularly wild flowers, encouraged him to enter the local annual horticultural show at a young age, an event he still recalls. "The head gardener from the big house would load up the black car, which I always thought was a hearse, and then drive with great ceremony to the next village with all the cut dahlias, roses and chrysanthemums. It was all very grand and, to a small boy, slightly terrifying." His bunches of wild flowers won him certificates for best in show and he still has them pinned up in his shed. Anyone in the nearby village of Slaley will tell you that he is still tough to beat in the village show in late August.

Albert came to Northumberland after studying for a PhD in Newcastle and then, as so many do, fell for the county of long horizons. "It's not a showy county like the Lake District or the Yorkshire Dales but it has a quiet beauty that seeps into you. On a good day you can see Hadrian's Wall and to the Cheviot Hills which mark the boundary with Scotland."

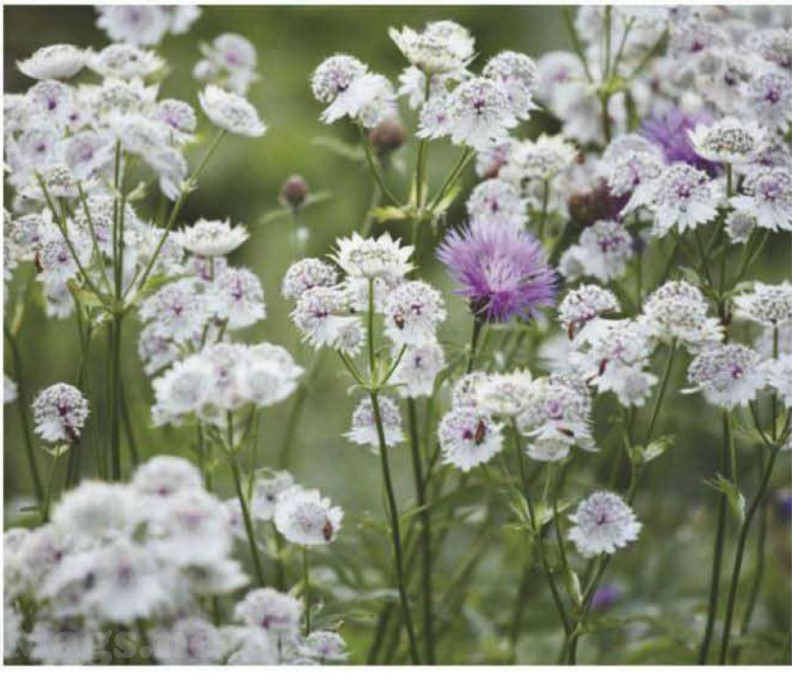
Thirty years as a conservation officer tutored his eye. In his garden there's always something interesting, beautiful, but never showy and looking like it's always been there. He's a rescuer of defunct objects, giving them a new life. Even his shed, painted in a broody grey the colour of a Northumberland sky, is a hybrid ▷

There are views past cottage garden plants out over the Northumberland landscape.

BELOW LEFT *Astrantia major.*

CENTRE A narrow bed runs down the middle of the sett stone pathway leading to Albert's characterful shed.

RIGHT The Turk's cap lily, *Lilium martagon.*



Shelter from stormy weather

This quirky hilltop garden is an oasis of colour in Northumberland's open countryside

WORDS **CAROLINE BECK** PHOTOGRAPHS **RAY MAIN**

The shed in Albert's garden has been created using parts of salvaged buildings. In the foreground are the yellow flowers of Jerusalem sage, *Phlomis fruticosa,* and the white *Rosa* 'Prosperity'. Behind, by the path, is *Verbascum chaixii* 'Album'.

BELOW LEFT Low dry stone walls shelter plants while allowing views over wild countryside.

BELOW Sweet william *Dianthus barbatus* 'Auricula-Eyed Mixed'.

BELOW RIGHT Front garden with clipped hebe mounds and Irish yew *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata' either side of the door.

▷ derived from demolished buildings. He visits salvage yards, sees something he likes and brings it home. "It might take a year or two before I find the right place for it."

Sweeping views

Albert bought the little cottage almost 30 years ago from the Forestry Commission and it came with a blank tenth of an acre. The Commission had owned all the land after the First World War when a national shortage of timber, primarily for use as pit props in the booming mining industry, had initiated the growing of industrial sized forests. He bought a bit more land and enclosed it with dry stone walling, so characteristic of the northern countryside, but left open the view over the meadows rich in clover and native grasses. The broad sweeping view from his garden acts as a backdrop, with no attempt to seal off the cultivated land from the wild landscape beyond.

The same goes for his planting. Foxgloves and sweet rocket *(Hesperis matronalis)* have jumped the boundary from the countryside into his garden, where they're left to self-seed among the named plants – but even these have a wild look about them. Scabious, verbascum, poppies and campanula echo the wild flowers of violet harebell, bloody cranesbill and the mauve melancholy thistle *(Cirsium heterophyllum)* just beyond the wall. Although they are contained within borders, by midsummer you can feel their desire to elbow their way out. "I don't want to see any bare soil," says Albert. "I give the garden a thorough weed around Easter time and then I more or less leave it to get on."

Albert doesn't stake anything either. In the week that I visited Trygill Burn Cottage, unseasonal gale-force winds had ripped throughout the north of England, tearing down trees and turning new foliage to a crisp. Albert's garden by comparison looked serene. "These walls allow the wind to filter through the gaps and not batter down the other side," he says, turning to gaze around the garden that he has created over three decades. "They're good for sheltering sheep – and good for plants too." ☐

From empty field to *plantaholic's delight*

A derelict farmhouse in the middle of a field has been made into a family home with a garden of exciting plants – a process that has taken one couple nearly 50 years

WORDS **JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARCUS HARPUR**

In brief

NAME Chestnut Farm.
WHAT Private farmhouse garden with extensive plant collections.
WHERE North Norfolk.
SIZE Three acres.
CONDITIONS Windy with mild winters.
SOIL Medium loam over sand and an almost impenetrable clay marl.
SPECIAL FEATURES Herbaceous borders, small arboretum, unusual flowering shrubs and spring bulb collections.

LEFT The Fountain Garden was planted in memory of Judy's mother and is filled with herbaceous plants including *Astrantia major* 'Alba', *Scabiosa* 'Butterfly Blue', ajuga and clematis.

BELOW The view towards the back of the farmhouse, where the ground level was lowered a couple of feet to create a lawn.

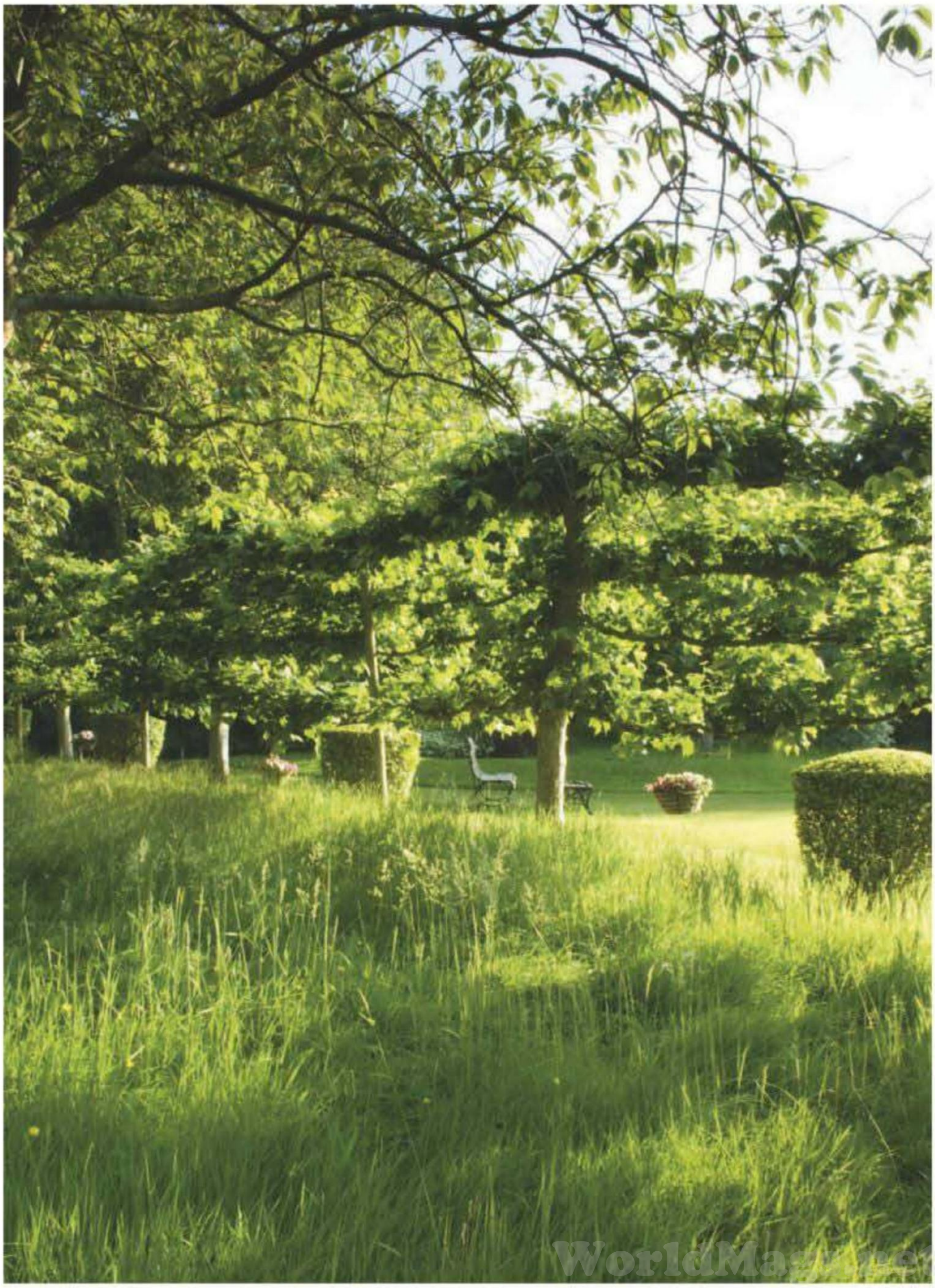
Norfolk: a county blessed with spectacular beaches, fertile farmland, the particular blessings of the Cromer Crab – and gardens. Among them Chestnut Farm stands out: it is a solid, unpretentious farmhouse garden but if you are likely to be whipped into a frenzy by interesting plants, then this is the place to go.

John and Judy McNeil-Wilson have lived here for all 47 years of their married life. "When we arrived," remembers Judy, "the house had been derelict for six years. We bought the land in order to extend our farm and the house came with it. There was no garden to speak of, just a field hedge and a few trees, although we did have bindweed growing in the dining room!" It is a special thing to see a garden that has had nearly half a century of continuous care from the same owners. They were not, like most people moving into their first house, complete novices. John had a family background in agriculture and Judy had studied horticulture. There was no grand plan for the garden and there still isn't; it has had the luxury of evolving over the years and it also maps the continuous passions and fleeting dalliances of an irredeemable plant fanatic.

The first task was the planting of stout windbreaks: an essential for any Norfolk garden as the wind whips in straight off the North Sea. Although these have sheltered the garden

LEFT Looking from the orchard to the straight path edged with pleached limes and clipped box vases.

BELOW The large tree at the back of the Fountain Garden is a *Crataegus persimilis* 'Prunifolia' that was planted by Judy and John. In the foreground is an un-named alstroemeria with a large clump of purple *Geranium* Patricia (= 'Brempat') behind.



> *"It is a special thing to see a garden that has had nearly half a century of continuous care from the same owners"*

they have now reached the stage where they are too tall and cast too much shade. After creating windbreaks, John and Judy just kept on planting more trees and shrubs, many of which are now great towering giants. The couple are now moving into a higher stage of gardening, one that few of us ever attain in one garden, where the trees that they originally planted have become too old and have either fallen or been felled. This creates gaps which John and Judy fill with new plants. For example, where formerly there was a large conifer, Judy has created a theatre garden: with a backdrop of Irish yew and footlights of box, she has created a stage for the heavy red seedpods of *Sinopodophyllum hexandrum,* a scrambling *Bomarea multiflora* and other rarities.

Spoilt for choice

The garden covers about three acres radiating away from a wide lawn by the house. From here there are various options: the fountain garden ("a formal layout with informal planting that I laid out in memory of my mother") or a wander up a straight path, edged with box vases and pleached limes, ("we planted them years ago but it took a while to learn how to prune them") towards the vegetable garden. You can head off among trees and shrubs towards the

9 of Judy and John's favourite plants

1 ***Pterostyrax hispida***
"We planted this small 'epaulette tree' about eight years ago. It has white filigree fringed petals in racemes which can be appreciated from eye level," says Judy.

2 ***Rosa* 'Paul's Himalayan Musk'**
"Now 30 feet high, with a similar spread, climbing a flag pole cherry. It was planted about 40 years ago. Slight perfume but great display when in flower."

3 ***Podophyllum versipelle* 'Spotty Dotty'**
"This has the most spectacular foliage over a long period of time; and produces large red fruits after flowering. It is a very rewarding plant."

4 ***Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip tree)**
"Imagine our excitement seeing the first flowers after waiting 20 or so years, and being able to peer into those lovely blooms."

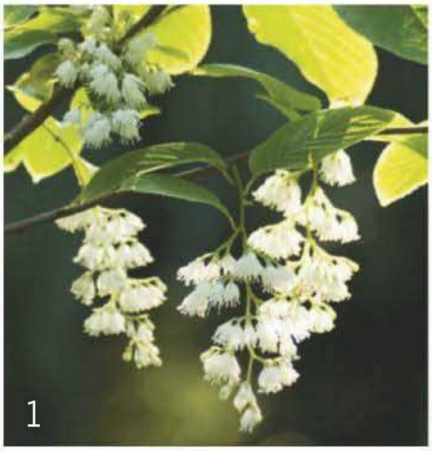
5 ***Ornithogalum magnum***
"At this time of year it is a great favourite, as is *O. pyrenaicum* which has naturalised freely under *Paulownia tomentosa*."

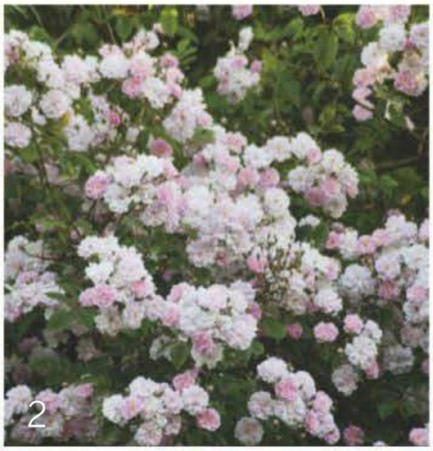
6 ***Dactylorhiza fuchsii***
"This common spotted orchid follows fritillaries and cowslips in a grassy glade with magnolias and *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis*."

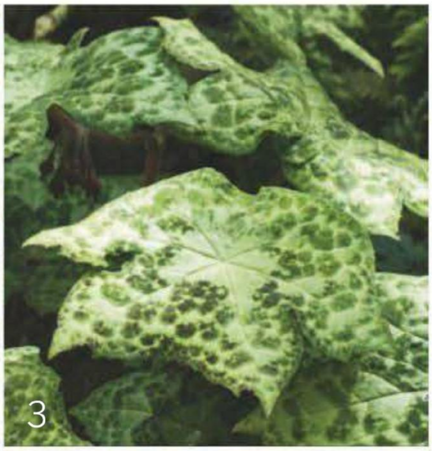
7 ***Philadelphus* 'Belle Etoile'**
"We love this mock orange shrub for its delicious perfume. We also have *P.* 'Beauclerk', which also smells gorgeous."

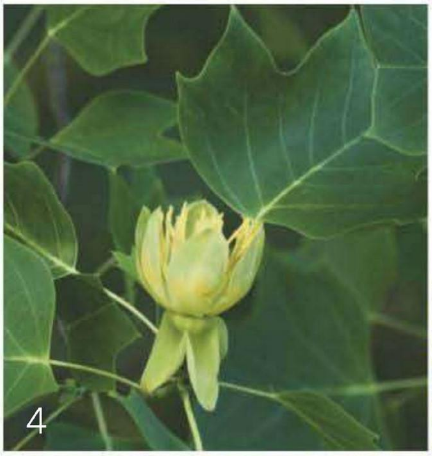
8 ***Dianthus carthusianorum***
"Useful because it creates a similar effect – although shorter – to that of *Verbena bonariensis*."

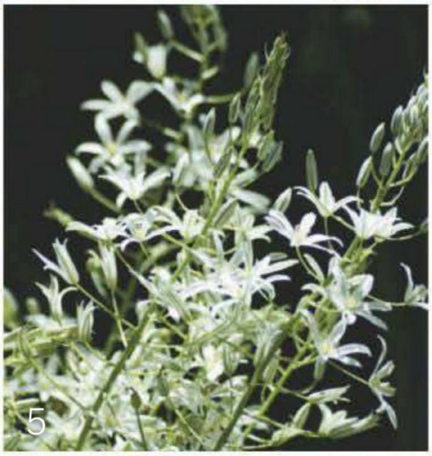
9 ***Pinellia ternata***
"Rewarding for the number of spathes produced over a long period, whereas arisaemas seem to produce a single spathe which is short lived."

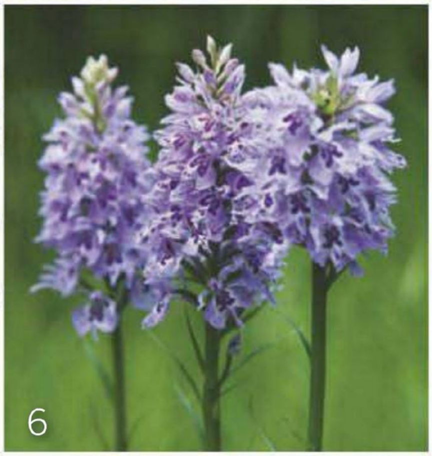


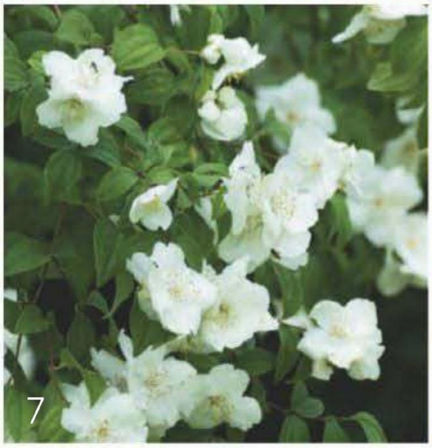


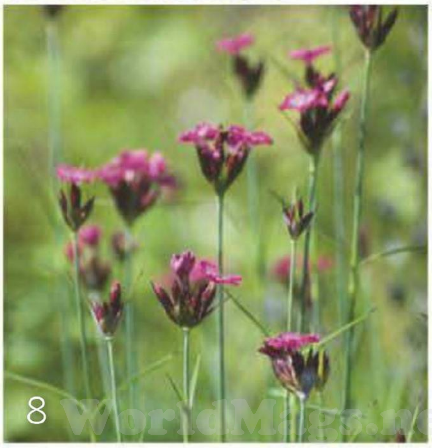


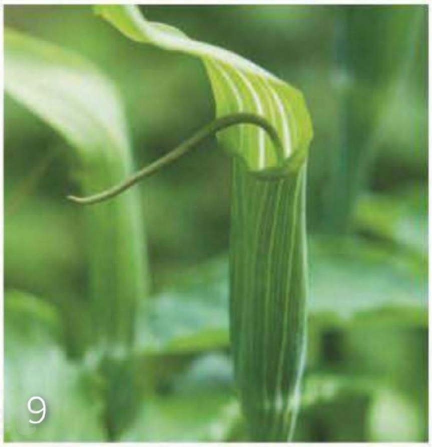












> *"They love their garden and adore all their plants, be they shrubs, trees, bulbs or climbers"*

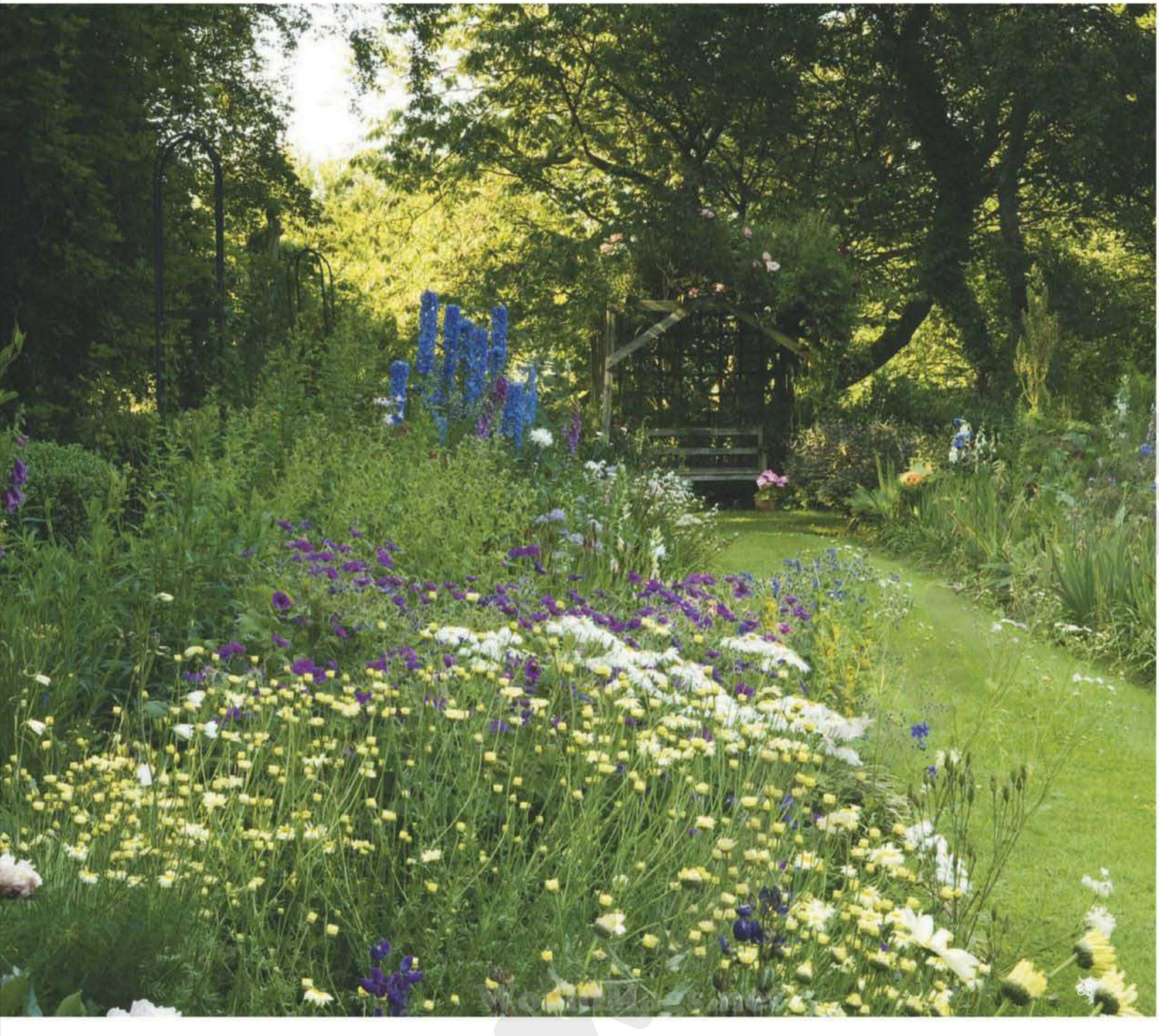
▷ paddock where you will find even more plants. These include a *Davidia* that makes Judy's heart flutter when it flowers; *Sinocalycanthus chinensis*; *Clerodendrons*; walnuts; exotic *Euonymus* (including the delicious *Euonymus cornutus* var. *quinquecornutus*); crab apples growing into arches and a handsome *Quercus frainetto* (Hungarian oak) planted by John for the millennium and remarkably strapping for one so young.

In winter there are birches, dogwoods and collections of snowdrops and hellebores, while in spring there are crocus and a meadow of fritillary. It is like a plant lover's treasure chest. Some plants-people become obsessed with a single genus while others are refreshingly polygamous in their horticultural relationships. John and Judy love their garden and adore all their plants, be they shrubs, trees, bulbs or interesting climbers. "We visit loads of gardens," explains John, so who can blame them for wanting to bring a little bit of each home to Norfolk? □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Chestnut Farm, Church Road, West Beckham, Norfolk NR25 6NX

OPEN Open for the NGS, with visiting nurseries, Sunday 22 July (11am-5pm). www.ngs.org.uk



BELOW The herbaceous borders, with the orchard beyond. In the foreground is *Anthemis tinctoria* 'Sauce Hollandaise' with cottage garden plants that include geraniums, aquilegias and and delphiniums beyond.

In brief

WHAT A private garden, created in the 1990s.
WHERE Northern Brittany, France.
SIZE One and three quarter acres.
SOIL Stony, acid and thin over granite, enriched with leaf mould and manure.
CONDITIONS Maritime and very windy. Mild, dry summers. Winters in recent years have been unusually cold.
SPECIAL FEATURES Strong, formal design, exuberant planting with limited palette of plants. Effective use of topiary and grasses.

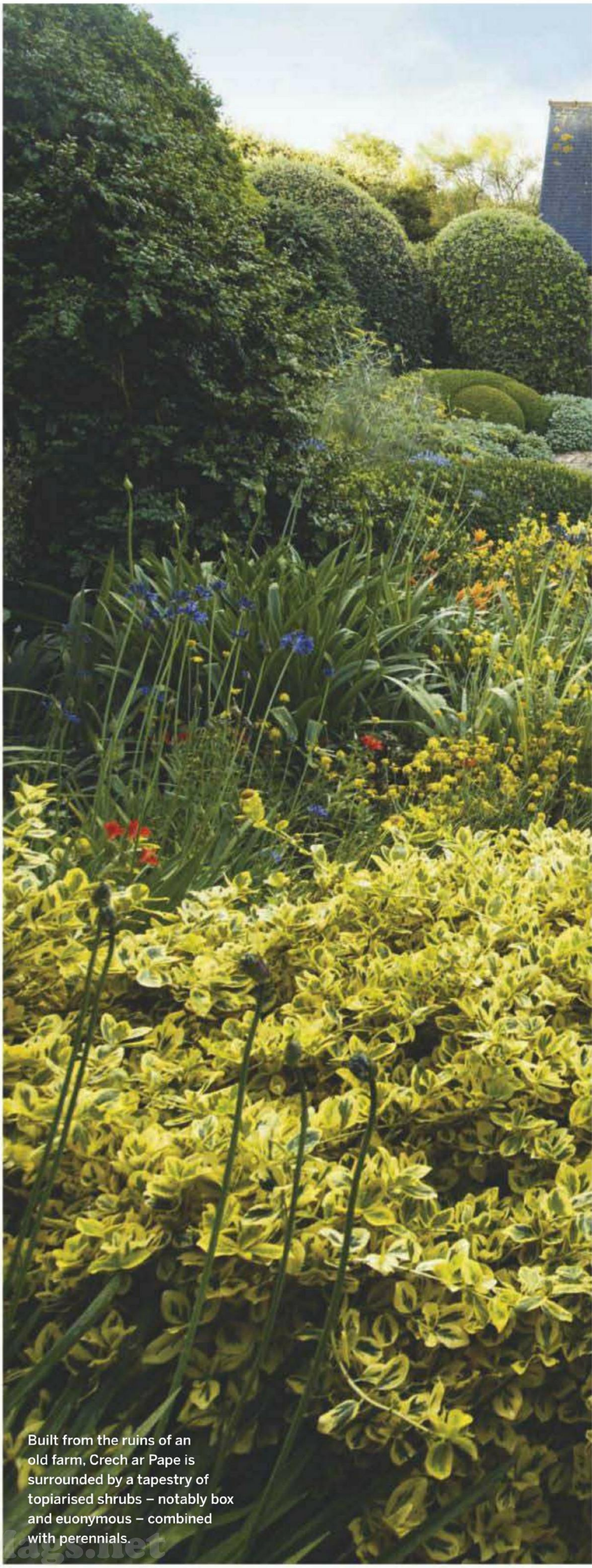
Timothy Vaughan is visiting a small Caribbean island, surveying the colossal hurricane damage to a garden there that he has known and loved over the years. Back home, in a corner of coastal Brittany that also has a reputation for being windswept, his wife Isabelle hands me the telephone. Timothy's voice is distant, the line from the Caribbean crackles, but the message is clear: "Structure endures. That was something that I learned from Russell Page while I was a student at Kew. Even the hurricane couldn't destroy that."

The Vaughans have met with hurricanes before. Isabelle's father was the late Prince Peter Wolkonsky (he died in 1997) who created the renowned Jardins de Kerdalo, close to St Malo in Brittany. When a hurricane tore through the gardens at Kerdalo in 1987, he was distraught. In 1999 another devastating gale ripped through Brittany. Isabelle and Timothy, both trained horticulturists, cleared and replanted and took the opportunity to create the sunken garden, giving it structure with clipped box and suppleness with herbaceous planting and bulbs. Shrubs and climbers were given the shelter of high walls. Trees might fall again but this would survive.

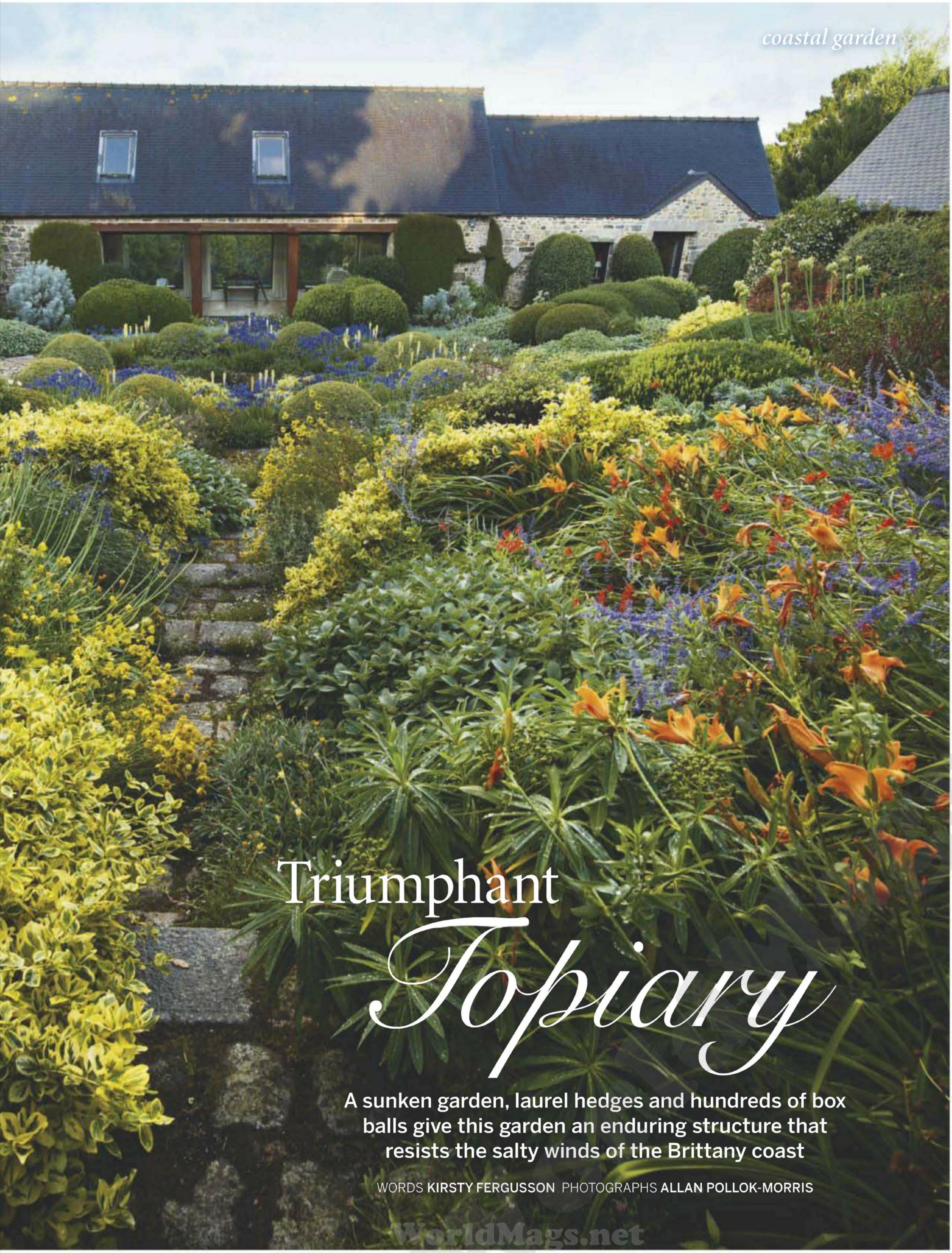
A room of one's own

By the time the gardens at Kerdalo were back on a sound footing, Isabelle and Timothy were longing for a place of their own. Eventually they came across the ruins of an old farm, Crech ar Pape, sitting in a small triangular plot of one and three quarter acres. There they created a comfortable home for themselves and their two young daughters, and Timothy wrapped a garden around the granite buildings, protected from Brittany's salty winds with high hedges of laurel.

Plant sales in the nursery they ran at Kerdalo were abandoned and the stock was used to fill out the emerging pattern of garden rooms and courtyards in the new garden. Other plants came from Spinners Garden in Hampshire, from the propagator Vic Palowski and from the Garden House in Buckland Monachorum, Devon. Grasses and perennials came also from Plantagenêt Plantes, ▷



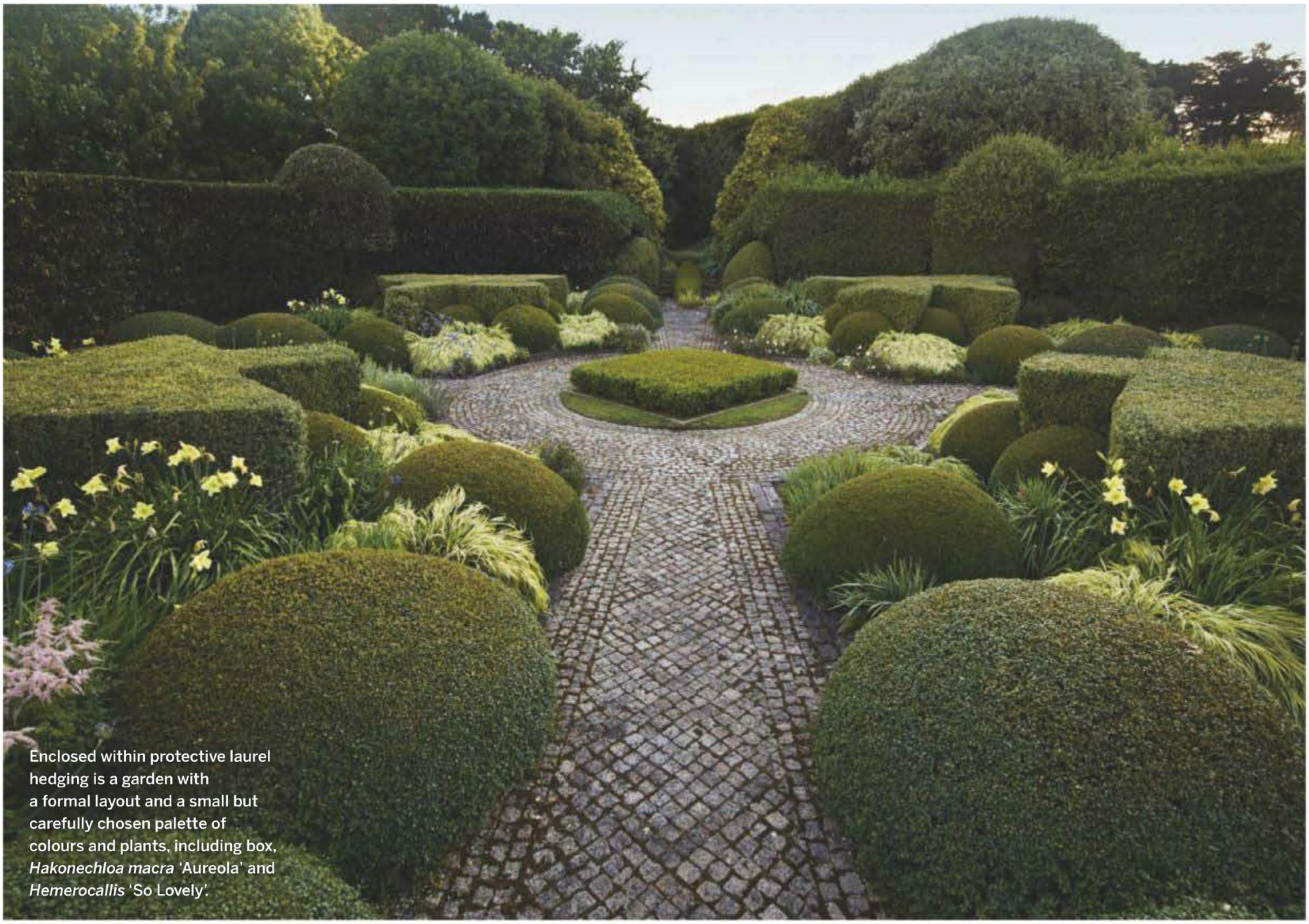
Built from the ruins of an old farm, Crech ar Pape is surrounded by a tapestry of topiarised shrubs – notably box and euonymous – combined with perennials.



Triumphant *Topiary*

A sunken garden, laurel hedges and hundreds of box balls give this garden an enduring structure that resists the salty winds of the Brittany coast

WORDS **KIRSTY FERGUSSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **ALLAN POLLOK-MORRIS**



Enclosed within protective laurel hedging is a garden with a formal layout and a small but carefully chosen palette of colours and plants, including box, *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' and *Hemerocallis* 'So Lovely'.

"It was the experience of working in some of France's grandest

▷ near Saumur, and the coastal herbaceous plant specialists, Lepage nursery, in Brittany. "Each plant was chosen very carefully," says Isabelle. "In a small space the biggest impact can be made with a limited range of plants."

What an impact it is. Every great garden transports you to another world but at Crech ar Pape the experience is dramatic. Simple blocks of colour, balanced by textured greens, dissolve into shadows. A great, golden, sunken garden makes you catch your breath with astonishment. There is humour too: that topiary really is great, rounded buttocks of box, that *Muehlenbeckia* really is an elephant's head and trunk. Light is gathered and focused and the eye is led down long, green perspectives that confuse one's sense of space. Timothy's disembodied voice echoes down the line: "Light is naturally very important. I think I've been fascinated by light ever since I was a kid on horseback, out in the Australian bush, observing the changes in colour." Timothy is English, but says school didn't work for him, so he ended up in Australia for a different kind of education.

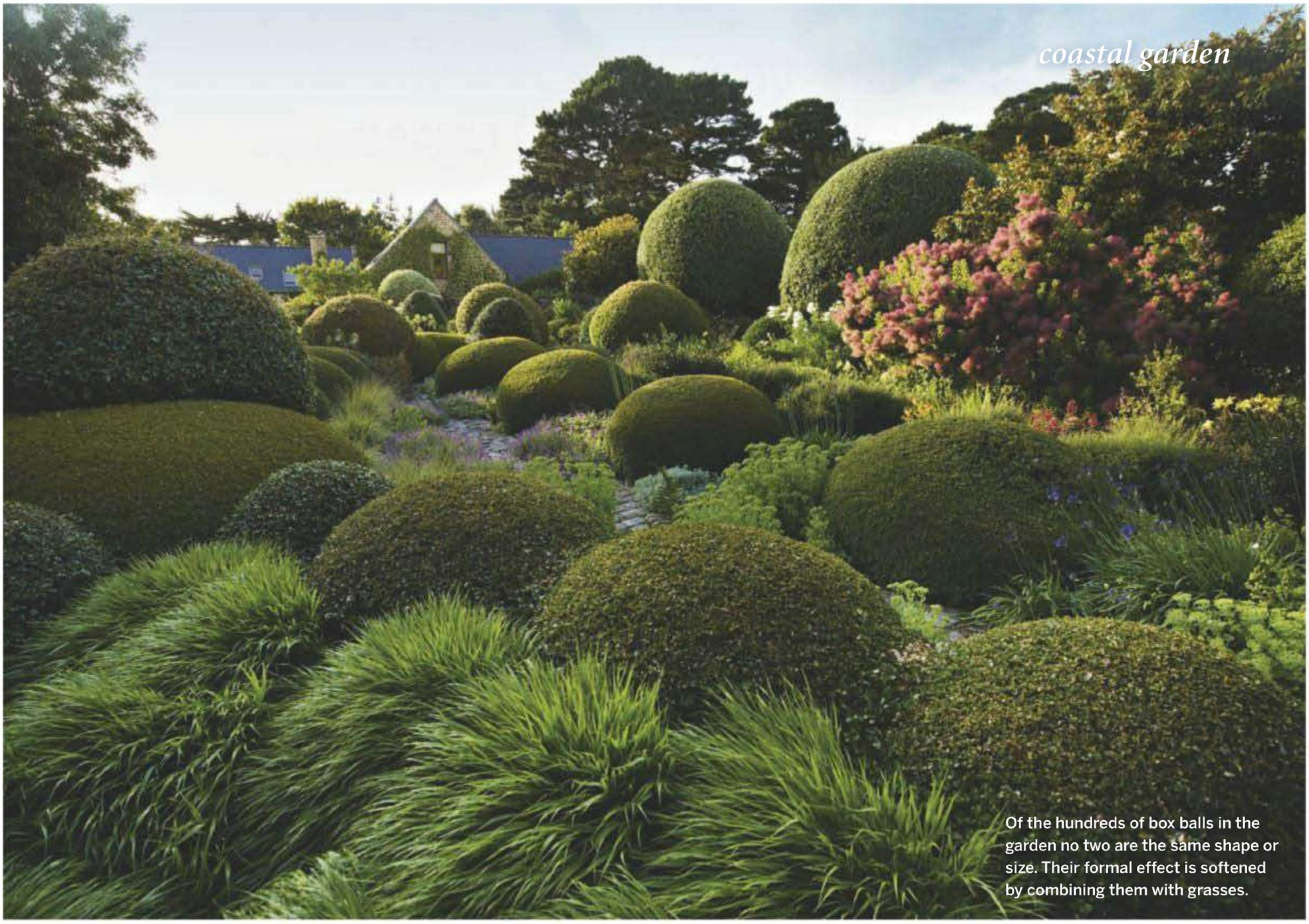
If it was the Australian bush that drew Timothy's attention to colour and light, it was the experience of working in some of France's grandest classical gardens that aroused his interest in structure. After a spell as a gardener in New Zealand he had the opportunity to train at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Isabelle, at the same time, was a student at RHS Wisley. From Kew, Timothy went to France and the great formal garden of Château Vaux-le-Vicomte. "Vaux revealed the power and importance of structure," he says, before adding: "I hate symmetry." He revises his statement: "I hate symmetry, but I love balance. That is the essence of structure." He tells me to look again at the hundreds of shaped box balls, hummocks and tumuli that define the planting at Crech ar Pape. "No two are the same; I let my shears guide me when I trim them."

This, he says will define the future of this garden. "Forms will become more billowy, the herbaceous planting will give way to simpler, less labour-intensive grasses – or more box – but the structure will remain. Flower gardens eventually look tired and old, but gardens with structure endure. Of all the landscapes that have influenced me, I think Castle Howard in Yorkshire is the most important. That is where I would like to be buried."

From a devastated island in the Caribbean, to a private paradise in Brittany, to the greatest green acres of Northern England, our thoughts find comfort in those aspects of a garden that endure time and tempests alike. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Although Crech ar Pape is a private garden, visits may be arranged for small groups. Call Isabelle Vaughan for information on +33 (0)6 62 04 55 89.

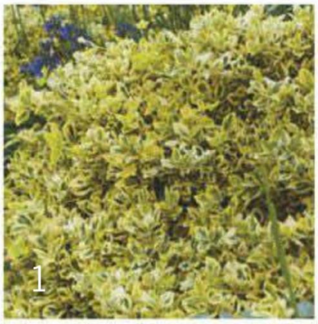


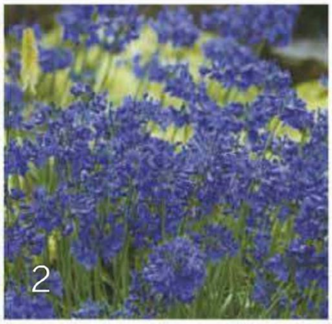
Of the hundreds of box balls in the garden no two are the same shape or size. Their formal effect is softened by combining them with grasses.

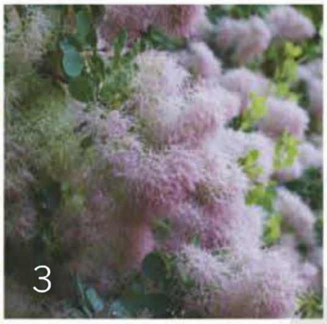
classical gardens that aroused Timothy's interest in structure"

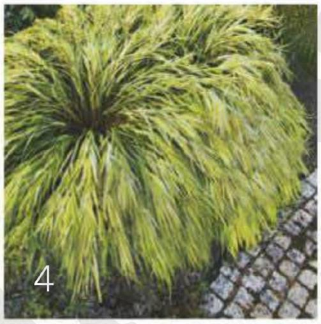
Favourite plants

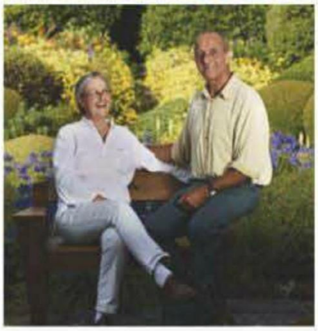
Four of Isabelle and Timothy Vaughan's favourite plants from their garden Crech ar Pape











1 ***Euonymus fortunei* 'Canadale Gold'**
"This is the brightest of all the euonymus cultivars with a naturally cushiony habit," says Isabelle.

2 ***Agapanthus* 'Bressingham Blue'**
"I chose this cultivar for its beautiful intense colour, as well as its form and the velvety lines of the stems," says Timothy.

3 ***Cotinus coggygria***
"A good form found at the Minier nurseries in Angers where it was listed under the name of *rubrifolia*," says Isabelle.

4 ***Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'**
The topiarised box balls throughout the garden are a combination of *Buxus sempervirens* and *B. microphylla*. "*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' is the perfect softly rippling grass to team with them," says Timothy, providing a pleasing contrast of colour and form.

Garden Getaways

Take inspiration from this selection of unique places to stay, the perfect retreat for any garden lover...

1. DORMY HOUSE HOTEL

The luxury four-star Dormy House Hotel near Broadway is offering a two-night Garden Escape with Dinner, B&B. Choose from a picnic and ticket to Hidcote, the masterpiece National Trust garden near Chipping Campden; or a cream tea and your ticket to Batsford Arboretum for stunning autumn colour. Hidcote ticket available until 31 August; Batsford all year round. Prices from £450 in a standard room for two people sharing a double or twin. Upgrades available.

WEBSITE **www.dormyhouse.co.uk**
TEL **01386 852711** EMAIL **reservations@dormyhouse.co.uk**

2. COURTLANDS NURSERIES

The two-acre, acre walled kitchen garden of an old Sussex country estate. Lovingly restored 17 years ago by planting over 50 varieties of trained fruit, creating extensive colourful borders and producing vegetables in abundance all for bed and breakfast guests to enjoy. Ideally located for visiting numerous National Trust properties and other gardens.

WEBSITE **www.courtlandsnurseries.co.uk**
TEL **01342 810780**

3. MAZEY COTTAGE

Relax as you soak up the bird song and scent in this atmospheric Cornish garden. There's ancient oaks, a tumbling stream, pond, colourful borders and 65 varieties of beautiful roses. Unwind in the summerhouse, kitchen garden with hens, or walk a mile to the sea. Idyllic, you won't want to leave!

WEBSITE **www.mazeycottage.co.uk**
TEL **01326 565868** EMAIL **stanley.m2@sky.com**

4. ROW FARM HOUSE, LAVERTON, BA2 7RA

This is an old house with a tower but the garden is newly created from a field. Pliny suggests a welcoming house comfortable all year, outdoor eating places, and an appealing garden leading to a wide country view. Old topiary, thick planting of trees, climbers, flowers, vegetables, fruit trees make this a pleasure at all seasons. This is a B&B for garden lovers within reach of Bath.

WEBSITE **www.sawdays.co.uk**
TEL **01373 834 778**

5. CAPHEATON HALL

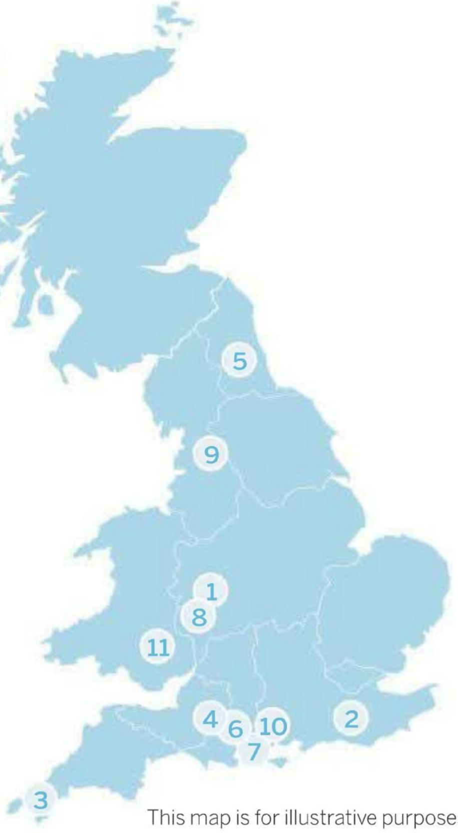
Capheaton Hall offers self catering accommodation for up to 8 people or bed and breakfast giving you unique access to an exceptional walled kitchen garden, large herbaceous border, extensive glasshouses with peaches nectarines and figs. A perfect base from which to visit the best gardens of Northumberland.

WEBSITE **www.capheatonhall.co.uk**
TEL **01830 530159/07900 013269**

6. DURRINGTON HOUSE

Carole has created a traditional country walled garden, complementing her elegant Georgian house just a stone's throw from Stonehenge. Old roses and peonies tumble in deep herbaceous borders flanking the pool, with specimen trees alongside. This contrasts with the upper terrace, a downland meadow set amid fruit trees and kitchen garden.

WEBSITE **www.durringtonhouse.co.uk**
TEL **01980 655405** EMAIL **carole@durringtonhouse.co.uk**



This map is for illustrative purposes only

7. LYTCHETT HARD

Evolving over 75 years, enhancing the pleasure of both visitors and guests, this serene Dorset garden has mature trees, sweeping lawns and romantically themed island borders. With its own wildlife rich SSSI heathland the 2 acre site overlooks a quiet tidal inlet of Poole Harbour. A true gardener's delight.

TEL **01202 622297** EMAIL **lytchetthard@ntlworld.com**

8. BROOK FARM BERRINGTON

Berrington is a tiny hamlet on the border of Shropshire Worcestershire and Herefordshire and here you will find a B&B, two pretty holiday cottages and a chaotic country garden where you will be served tea and cake when you arrive (unless it is raining in which case it will be by the fire!).

WEBSITE **www.brookfarmberrington.com**
TEL **01584 819868** EMAIL **sarah@brookfarmberrington.com**

9. AUSTWICK HALL

A romantic country retreat, furnished with fine art and antiques: a place to relax, indulge and recharge. Explore the gardens and woodland sculpture trail set in the stunning Yorkshire Dales National Park. Ideally placed for exploring the gardens of Yorkshire and the Lake District.

WEBSITE **www.austwickhall.co.uk**
TEL **015242 51794** EMAIL **austwickhall@austwick.org**

10. LORDINGTON HOUSE

Fine 17th-Century house surrounded by walled and topiaried gardens in the Ems Valley on the Hampshire/ Sussex border within the South Downs National Park. Near Chichester, Goodwood, Midhurst, Petersfield, Portsmouth. Comfortable B&B accommodation in double, twin and single rooms. Please contact Mr & Mrs John Hamilton.

TEL **01243 375862** EMAIL **hamiltonjanda@btinternet.com**

11. UPPER NEWTON FARMHOUSE

Close to Hay-on-Wye, this picturesque farm-based accommodation is set within lovely gardens. Cottage sleeping four, recently refurbished and ready to be your base for garden visits and activities in the peaceful but vibrant secret county of Herefordshire. Delicious locally sourced breakfasts available served in the garden, in the farmhouse or your cottage.

WEBSITE **www.herefordshireholidays.co.uk**
TEL **01544 327727** EMAIL **pearl@herefordshireholidays.co.uk**

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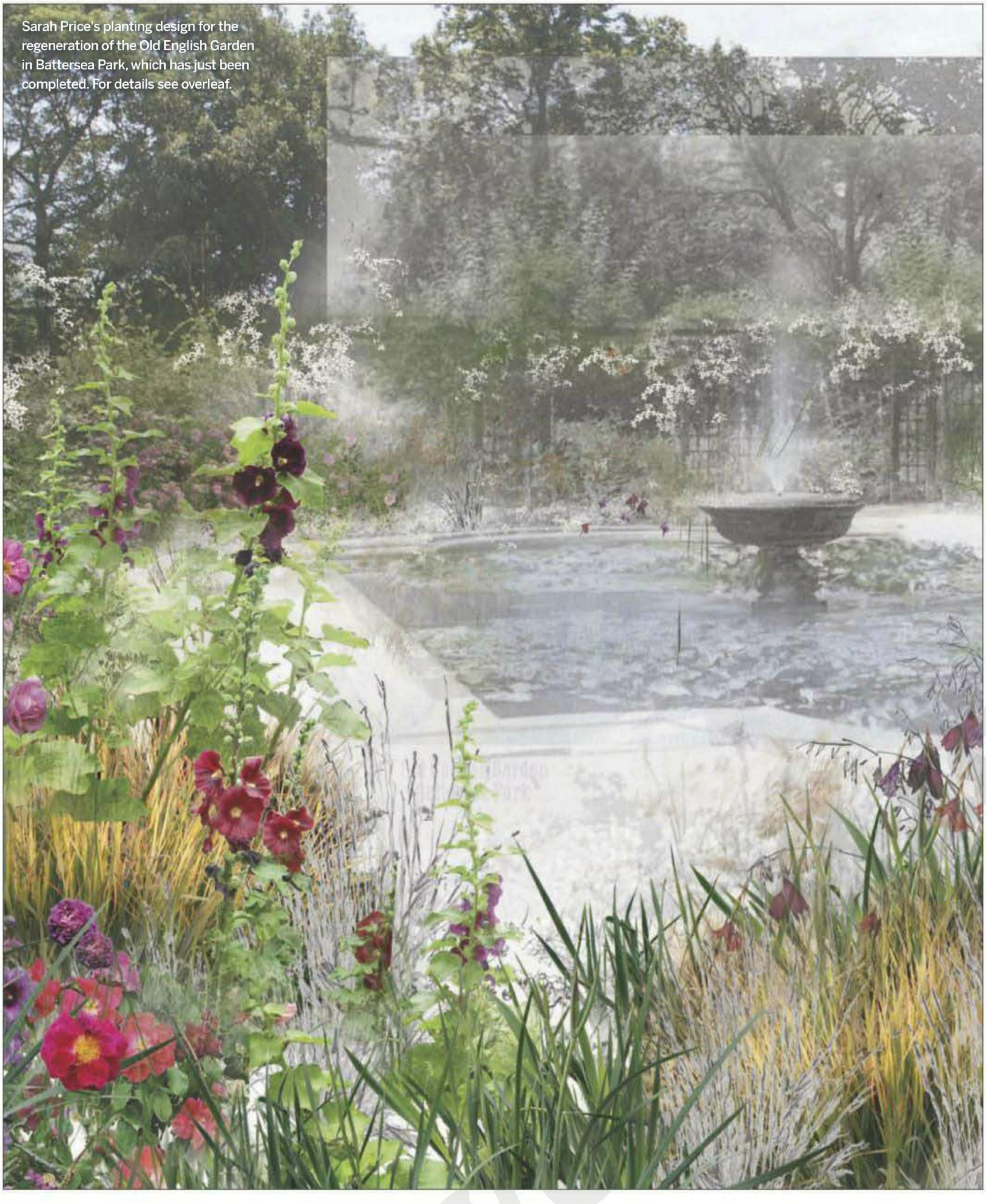

Sarah Price's planting design for the regeneration of the Old English Garden in Battersea Park, which has just been completed. For details see overleaf.

Workshops 2012

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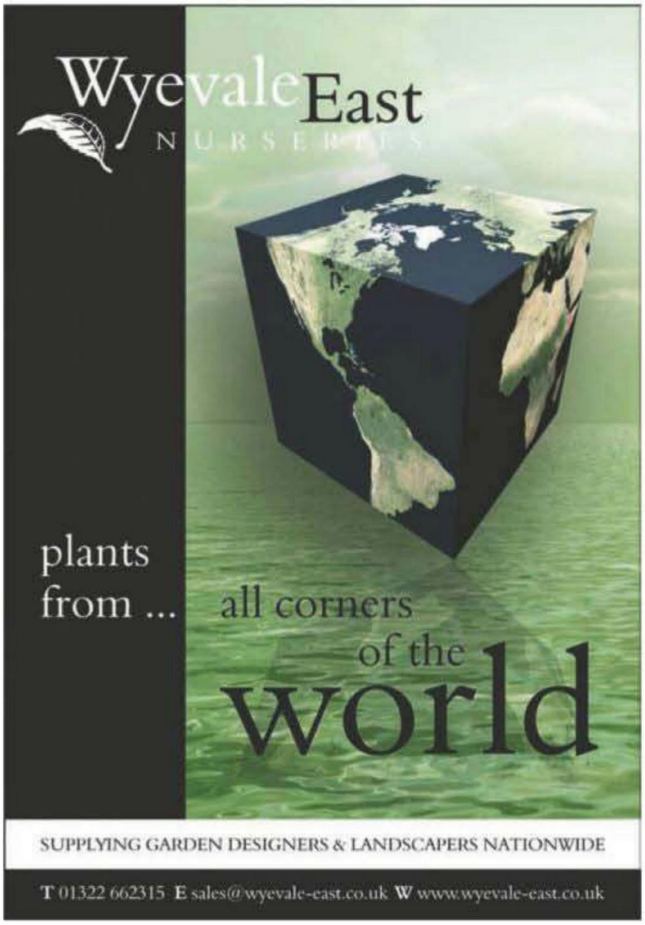

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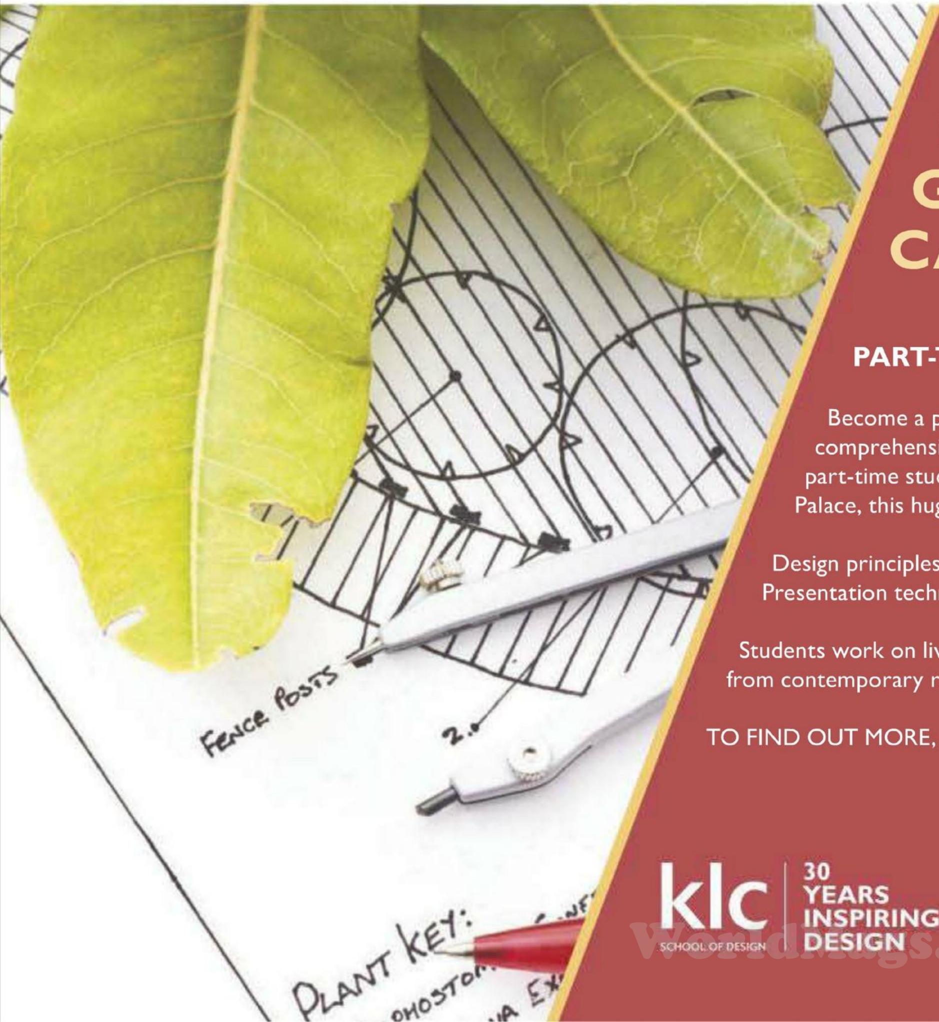

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News

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**

EXHIBITION

Sculpture in the wilderness

Garden of Reason, an exhibition of nine new artworks inspired by the 17th-century formal gardens at the National Trust's Ham House, Richmond Upon Thames, is on show in the grounds until 23 September. Artists Simon Periton and Alan Kane present substitutions for historic sculptures formerly in the Wilderness area of the garden. They have set them on wooden plinths suggested by the orange boxes which supported the original statues (see right). Other works include a pair of topiary telescopes by Graeme Miller and a sound installation by Kathleen Herbert. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

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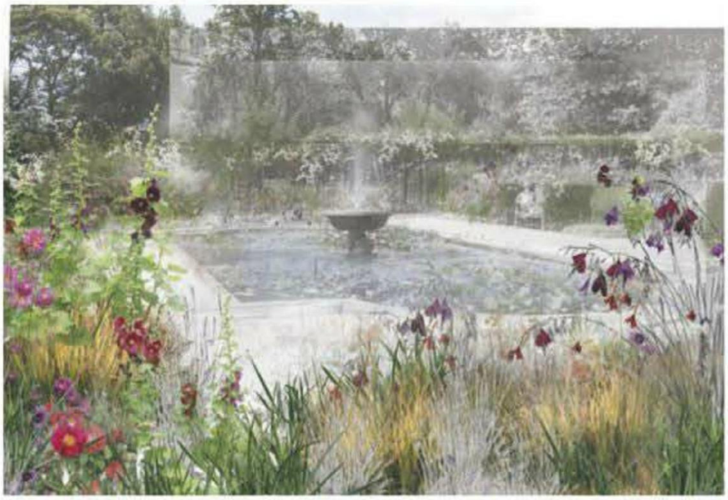

RESTORATION

Old English Garden

The regeneration of the Old English Garden in London's Battersea Park has just been completed. Designed by Lt Col John Saxby in the early 20th century, it has been given fresh planting with a design by Sarah Price. A formal area of geometric beds around a pool retains original box edging but the new planting is more naturalistic, with perennials, bulbs and grasses. It was undertaken by disabled people on a gardening programme run by the charity Thrive. Plantings of scented flowers, herbs and trees – including lilies, roses, mint and jasmine – have been supported by the fragrance company Jo Malone Ltd, which is also funding the maintenance of the garden for two years. www.batterseapark.org

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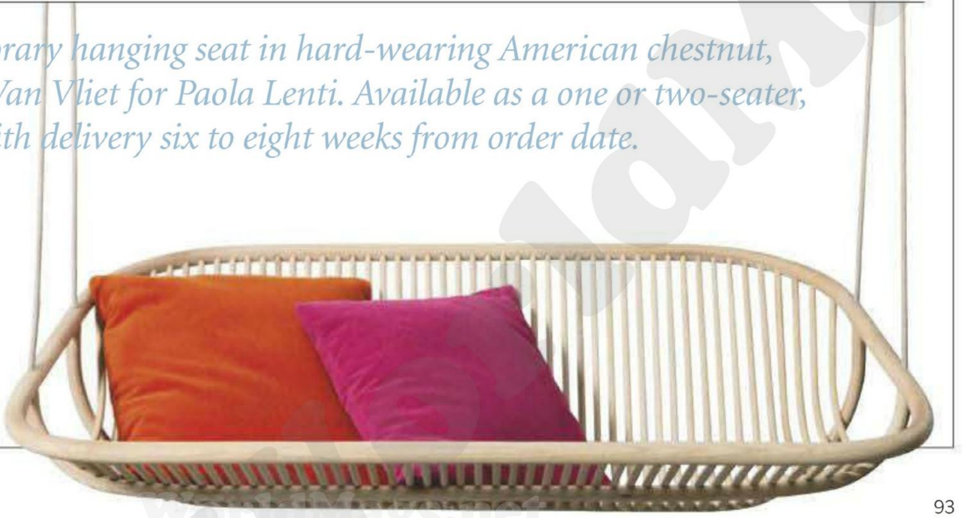
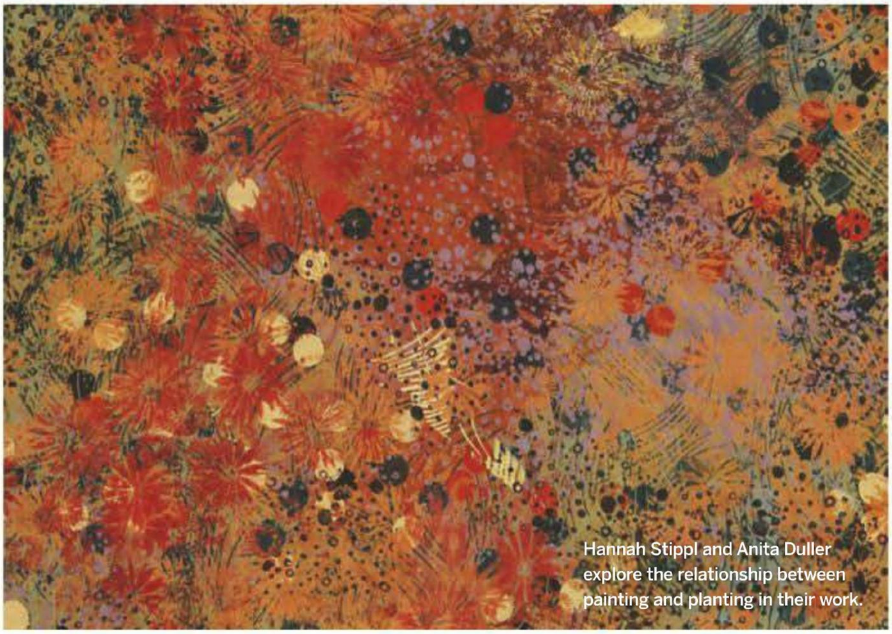
'Swing' is a contemporary hanging seat in hard-wearing American chestnut, designed by Edward Van Vliet for Paola Lenti. Available as a one or two-seater, it is made to order, with delivery six to eight weeks from order date.



One seat 'Swing' £2,790, two seat £3,228, seat pads and back cushions extra. To order contact the Modern Garden Company. Tel 01279 653200, www.moderngardencompany.com


Hannah Stippl and Anita Duller explore the relationship between painting and planting in their work.

CONTEMPORARY ART

Dialogue between art and the garden

Visitors to the Chelsea Fringe, pop-up, Garden of Disorientation in Clerkenwell, London, during the RHS Chelsea Flower Show will have seen the layered painting technique of two Vienna-based landscape designers, Hannah Stippl and Anita Duller. Their innovative method of designing planting schemes involves clients in a series of painting workshops. These aim to discover the colours, shapes and textures of the plants that could be used to mimic the effect of the paintings, creating a dialogue between art and the garden, says Hannah. For more information email the artists at theflowerbeds@gmx.net. Commissions in the UK can be considered.

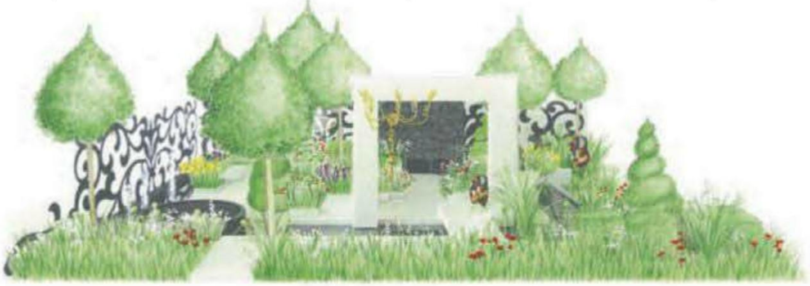
INSTALLATIONS

Art in the Olympic Park

RUN, a steel artwork by Monica Bonvicini, is 9m tall – the largest 'Art in the Park' piece at London's Olympic Park. In *History Trees* by Ackroyd and Harvey, three semi-mature trees, with a metal ring suspended in their canopy engraved with words about the history of each site, mark the entrances to the park. Of the 26 installations, 24 will be permanent. www.london2012.com

GARDEN FESTIVAL

Heather Appleton's clipped hornbeams suggest Russian cupolas in her St Petersburg Russian Museum Garden, one of the entries in the new category in The World of Gardens at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. 3-8 July. Tel 0844 338 7506, www.rhs.org.uk



Notebook

- **A database of more than 2,500 historic green spaces** in London, compiled by the London Parks and Gardens Trust and backed up with photographs and other material, is now available to view online. London Gardens Online will be regularly updated. www.londongardensonline.org.uk
- **A new masterclass** on using drought tolerant grasses will be given by expert Neil Lucas, at his nursery Knoll Gardens in Dorset, on 26 July and 30 August at 2pm. Book at www.knollgardens.co.uk or call 01202 873931.
- **Designers Sarah Price and Nigel Dunnett** discuss their personal approaches to planting design and give insight into their collaboration on the 2012 Gardens at the Olympic Park. West Dean College, West Sussex, 20 October. To book, visit the website www.westdean.org.uk or call 01243 811301.
- **The RedBook Agency** is a new service helping clients find the ideal architect or landscape designer for their project. Anthony Paul and Arabella Lennox-Boyd are two of the practices working with the agency. Call 020 7060 6222 or visit www.redbookagency.com
- **The winner of the Student Design & Build 2012** competition, sponsored by Wyevale East Nurseries with the RHS, will have their design entered for Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in 2013. The closing date is 31 August. www.gardendesignaward.co.uk

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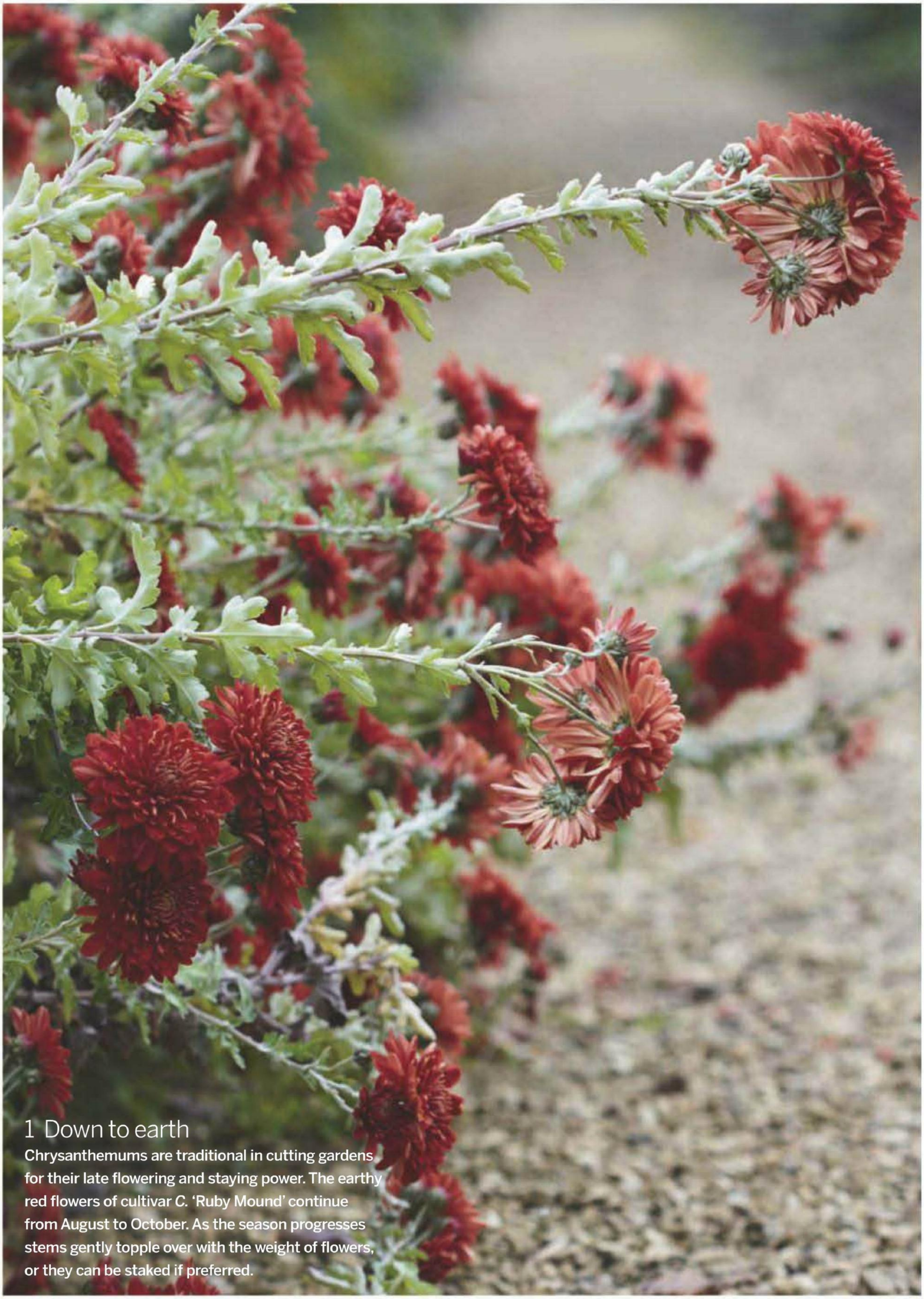


1 Down to earth

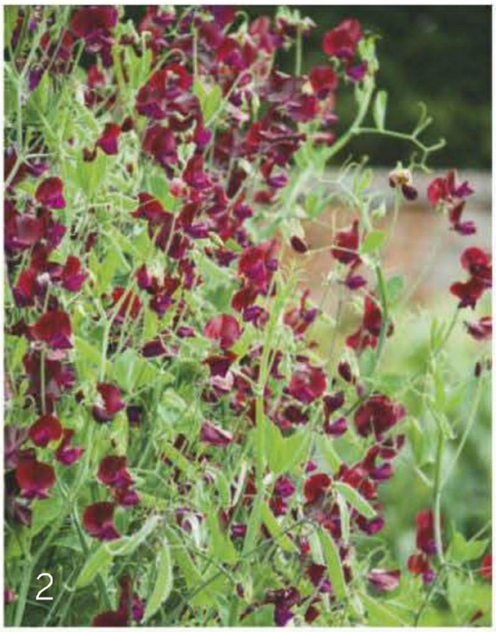
Chrysanthemums are traditional in cutting gardens for their late flowering and staying power. The earthy red flowers of cultivar *C.* 'Ruby Mound' continue from August to October. As the season progresses stems gently topple over with the weight of flowers, or they can be staked if preferred.

Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

Cutting gardens

Plant fragrant sweet peas, some favourite cottage garden annuals and a medley of dahlias and you'll have plenty of flowers for vases and bouquets

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD PHOTOGRAPHY BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER



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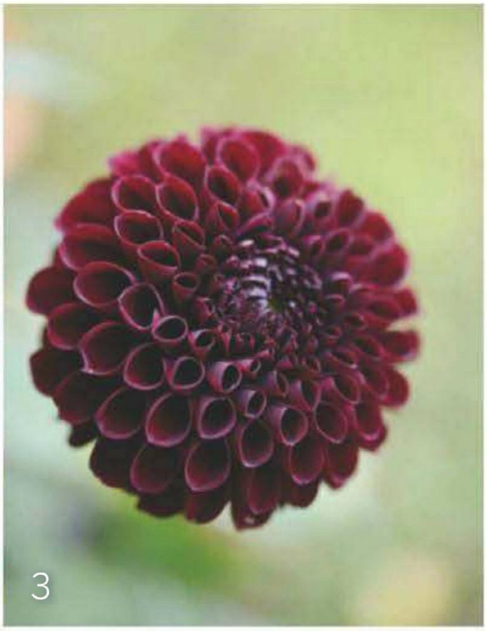

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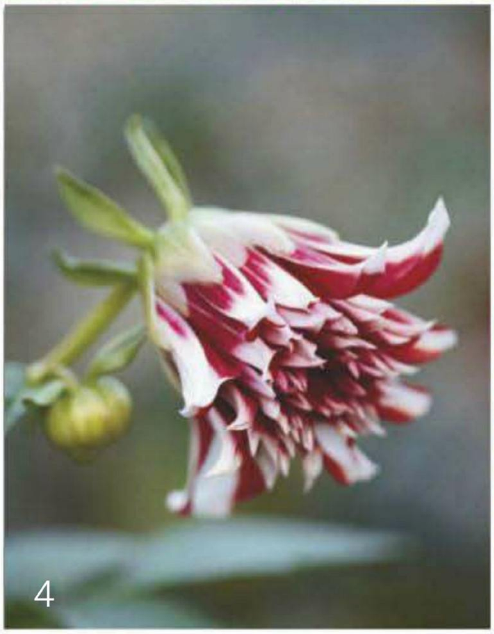

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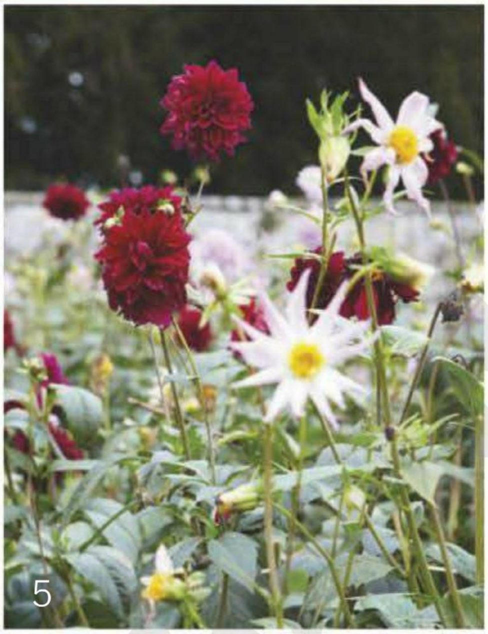

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3 JASON INGRAM

2 Sweet favourites

Every cutting garden should have room for a row or two of sweet peas, perhaps mixed among the vegetables. *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Beaujolais' has rich maroon flowers and a heavenly scent.

3 Cut and keep

Dahlia 'Arabian Night' was part of my colour scheme last year, with burgundy pompom flowers. Once flowering is finished, lift tubers and store in a dark, dry and frost-free place for re-planting next year.

4 Potting up

Dahlia 'Tartan' has petals striped burgundy and white. Rather than planting directly in the ground, I plant dahlias in pots first. This helps bring them on, so they're further ahead once planted out, a useful way of getting small cutting gardens going.

5 Cartwheels and pompoms

Dahlias come in such a range of petal arrangements that it's possible to have a cutting garden composed entirely of different types. In the foreground is the cartwheel *D.* 'Honka White', with the full velvety heads of *D.* 'Mingus Alex' seen behind.

Gather ye dahlias

Gathering flowers from your cutting beds, choosing shapes and shades to put together, is one of the delights of summer gardening. Here, in shades of pink and lilac, are some favourites:

6 *Dahlia* 'Sascha'

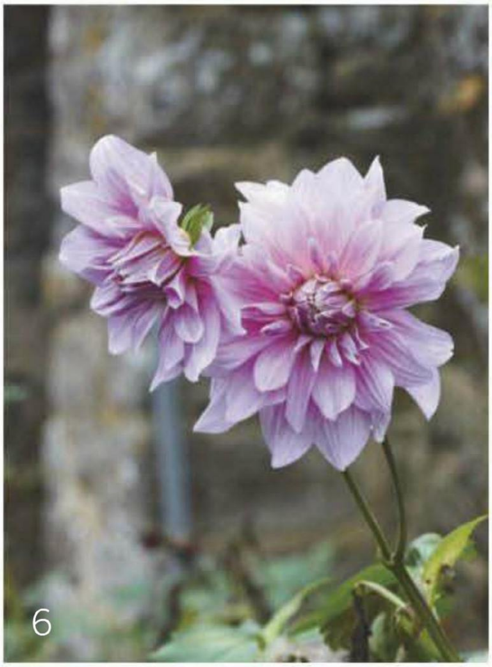
7 *Dahlia merckii*

8 *Dahlia* 'Le Baron'

9 *Dahlia* 'Thomas A Edison'

10 End of season

There's a particular pleasure that comes from picking the last of the late flowers. *Dahlia* 'White Star' and *D.* 'Mingus Alex' have looked wonderful in garden and vase alike, but now gradually collapse at the end of the gardening year. The season to come always has its own appeal, even when that season is winter.



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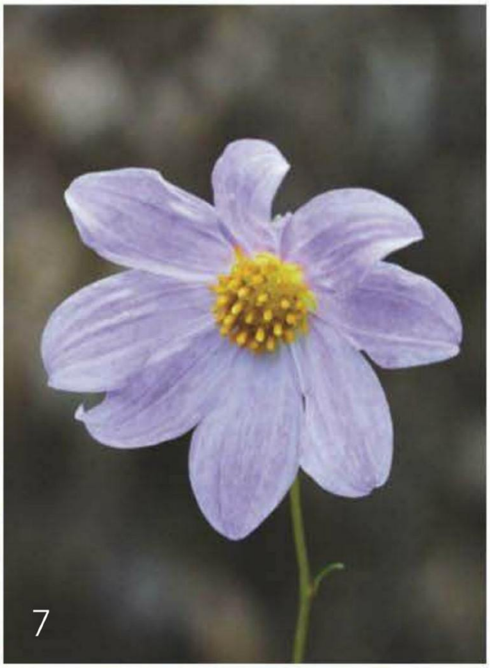

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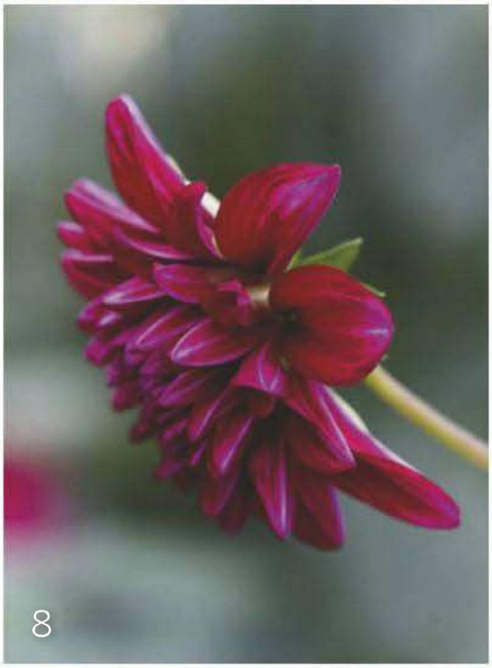

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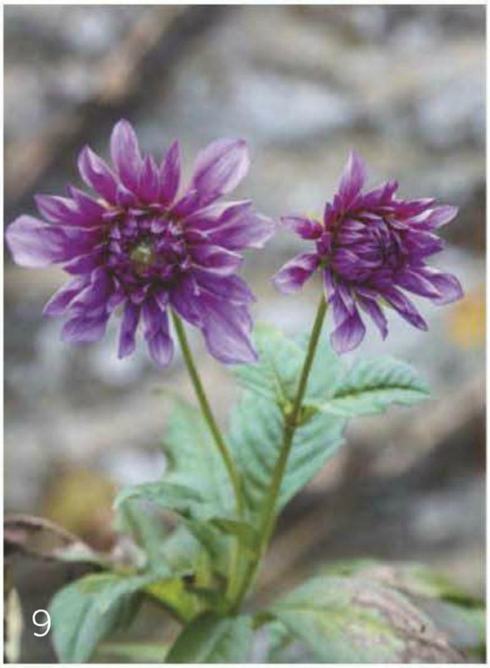

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In my garden at Allt-y-Bela, space for growing cutting flowers is quite limited, so I plan the year in advance from seed and bulb catalogues, selecting my palette of colours and the flowers I'm going to plant.

I grow my cutting flowers alongside the vegetables in the kitchen garden, but to vary things I like to change the position each year. Last year I grew them all together in a square 4m x 4m bed, but this year they're in two narrow beds, each 4m x 1.5m, either side of the entrance. To get to the centre of the garden, you walk through a little double border. If I've run out of space, I'll plant between the rows of vegetables, which looks lovely and helps bring in pollinating insects and the natural predators of crop pests (such as hoverflies that feed on aphids).

I start by choosing a colour theme for the whole year, and this year everything is pale – so pale blues, cream and white. It's an intensive regime: because I'm harvesting the flowers like a crop. As soon as they've finished flowering, spring bulbs have to come up to make way for the summer flowers. Bulbs grown for cutting are generally spent after flowering, so there's little point in keeping them. On a smaller scale, I grow

Stockists and inspiration

The borders at **Rousham House and Garden** are always a fantastic inspiration.
Rousham, Oxfordshire
OX25 4QU.
Tel 01869 347110,
www.rousham.org

Rose Cottage Plants has a great website, where the dahlias are organised by colour and there is a wonderful selection.
Tel 01992 573775,
www.rosecottageplants.co.uk

Whether you decide to tone or clash in your cutting garden, have a look at **Chrysanthemums Direct** which has a huge range of chrysanthemum colours and types to choose from.
www.chrysanthemumsdirect.co.uk

some spring and summer flowers, including tulips, in big pots. This summer I'm growing dahlias and chrysanthemums. I'm even getting a taste for the chrysanthemums with big reflexed heads – something I never imagined, but they remind me of my childhood. The sweet peas and dahlias are all pinks, pale lilacs and cream. The year will end with a burst of burnt cinnamons, toffee colours and deep maroon pinks.

For earlier flowering, there are martagon lilies *(Lilium martagon)* and St Brigid's anemones *(Anemone coronaria)* in staggered rows with bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum') for the foliage, sweet peas and a few very deep magenta gladioli. Then there are the annual flowers: cornflowers, corn cockle, larkspur, nigella – and these are scattered in drifts among the larger flowers. Colour schemes work well where space is restricted, and I love the sense of continuity they bring. Maybe next year will just be white with acid greens. In the same area of the garden, I'll also plant scented-leaf pelargoniums in old tin buckets and pots, so that the peppermint or rose-scented leaves can be cut and added to a bunch of white sweet peas for the table.□

NEXT MONTH Earthworks

Landscape & garden event

The event is held in the historic Northern Italian town of Bergamo, where the Piazza Vecchia will be turned into an elegant garden setting from 30 August right through to 16 September.

How can we promote and enhance our urban environments and natural landscapes?

I Maestri del Paesaggio: **International Meeting of the Landscape and Garden**
30 August – 16 September 2012, Bergamo, Italy

Landscape and Garden conference 2012

Date 30 August – 2 September 2012
Venue Bergamo, Italy
Cost €130 + VAT

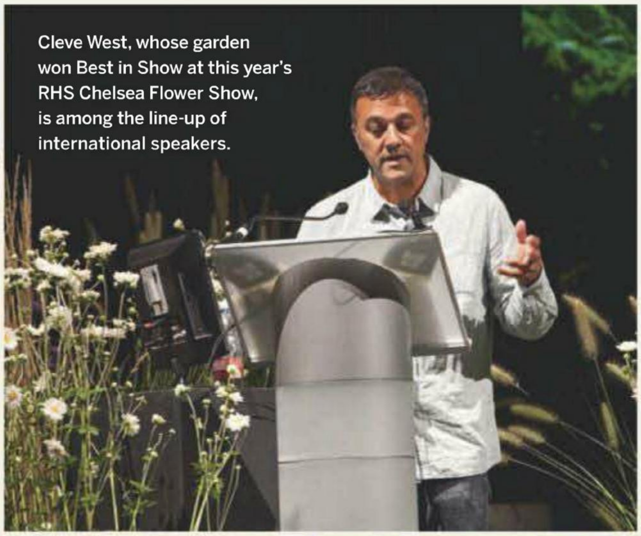
Cost includes all talks, seminars, lunch on 1 September, translation service and three-day public transport pass. Workshops and gala dinner charged at an additional cost.

Join this landmark cultural gathering held in the historic city of Bergamo in northern Italy and enjoy a series of events and exhibitions focused on garden design, architecture, ecology, art and education. The highlight event sees a weekend of talks, seminars and workshops from internationally renowned urban and landscape architects and garden designers. Up for discussion is the way in which we promote a more sustainable and integrated use of our landscape. All the events held over the 18-day period are open to both professionals and interested individuals.

Event activities

- Attend workshops led by international guest speakers
- Enjoy a Gala Evening held in the town square
- Have dinner at the new, sustainability focused 'i.land' corporate park
- Take a guided tour of the historic city of Bergamo
- Relax in the Piazza Vecchia transformed into a garden setting
- Visit the International Garden Photographer of the Year exhibition

For information about the event visit **www.arketipos.org**, where you can also register for the conference and sign up for your choice of workshop



Cleve West, whose garden won Best in Show at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, is among the line-up of international speakers.

As well as the series of talks, you can also choose to take part in a workshop, attend the Gala Evening, or simply enjoy discovering the hilltop town of Bergamo.

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At this year's conference

Speakers

John Brookes (UK) Widely regarded as an innovative and inspirational designer and plantsman. He has also written 24 bestselling books.

Christian Dobrick (the Netherlands) Part of the design team at West 8, which has a particular focus on public space design.

Gabriele Kiefer (Germany) Founding partner of KieferCS working on the conversion of large areas and urban spaces.

Catherine Mosbach (France) Runs a landscape architecture practice in Paris. She is co-editor and co-founder of the magazine *Pages Paysages*.

Marco Pozzoli (Italy) International designer and director of the European School of Garden and Landscape Architecture at Villa Montalto.

Arend Jan van der Horst (the Netherlands) Runs a busy garden and landscape architecture studio, as well as hosting international garden tours.

Peter Walker (USA) Award-winning landscape architect whose projects include small gardens, urban plazas, academic campuses and new cities. He is also founder of Spacemaker Press.

Cleve West (UK) Fresh from his success at the 2012 RHS Chelsea Flower Show where he won Best in Show for the second year running. Cleve has a reputation for innovative garden landscapes.

Roberto Burdese (Italy) President of Slow Food Italy working for the development of agricultural food products that are based on biodiversity, quality, the land and community.

Workshops

Christian Dobrick (the Netherlands) From West 8 design practice, renowned for their international urban design and landscape architecture projects.

Peter Fink (UK) Founding partner of FoRM Associates, whose urban design projects focus on the 'liveability' of the modern city.

Luciano Giubbilei (UK) Award-winning Italian-born garden designer renowned for the understated elegance of his work.

Charlotte Rowe (UK) Garden designer working on international urban and rural projects from her London-based practice.

Rainer Schmidt (Germany) With studios in Germany and China, Rainer has worked on numerous landscape architecture and urban design projects.

Philip Smith (UK) Member of the Professional Garden Photographers Association and founder of the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition.

Andy Sturgeon (UK) Award-winning garden designer who combines traditional materials and contemporary styling. He has just won gold for his 2012 RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden.

Cleve West (UK) Chelsea-winning garden designer and allotment devotee who published his first book *Our Plot* in 2011.

Franco Zagari (Italy) An architect and landscape architect whose work has a focus on parks, gardens and landscape planning.

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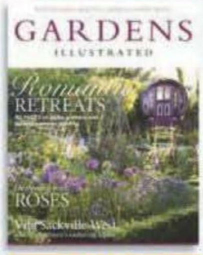

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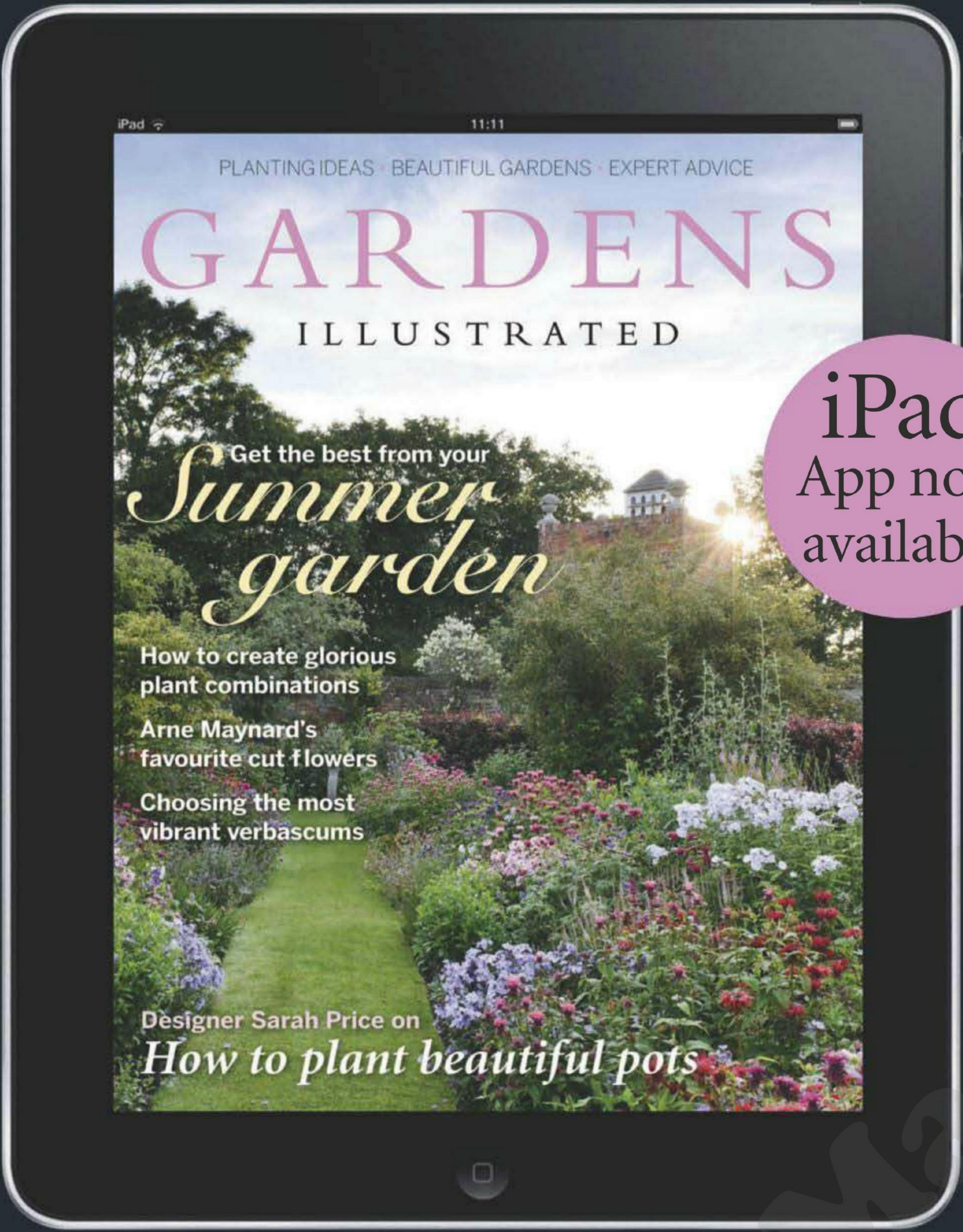
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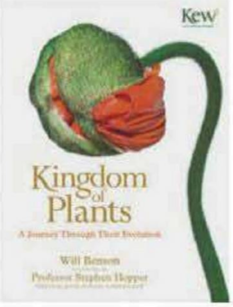
Book reviews and Crossword

Root power: dense root networks enrich soil and prevent erosion, one of the images from the new book *Kingdom of Plants*, reviewed overleaf.

(C) SUPERSTOCK

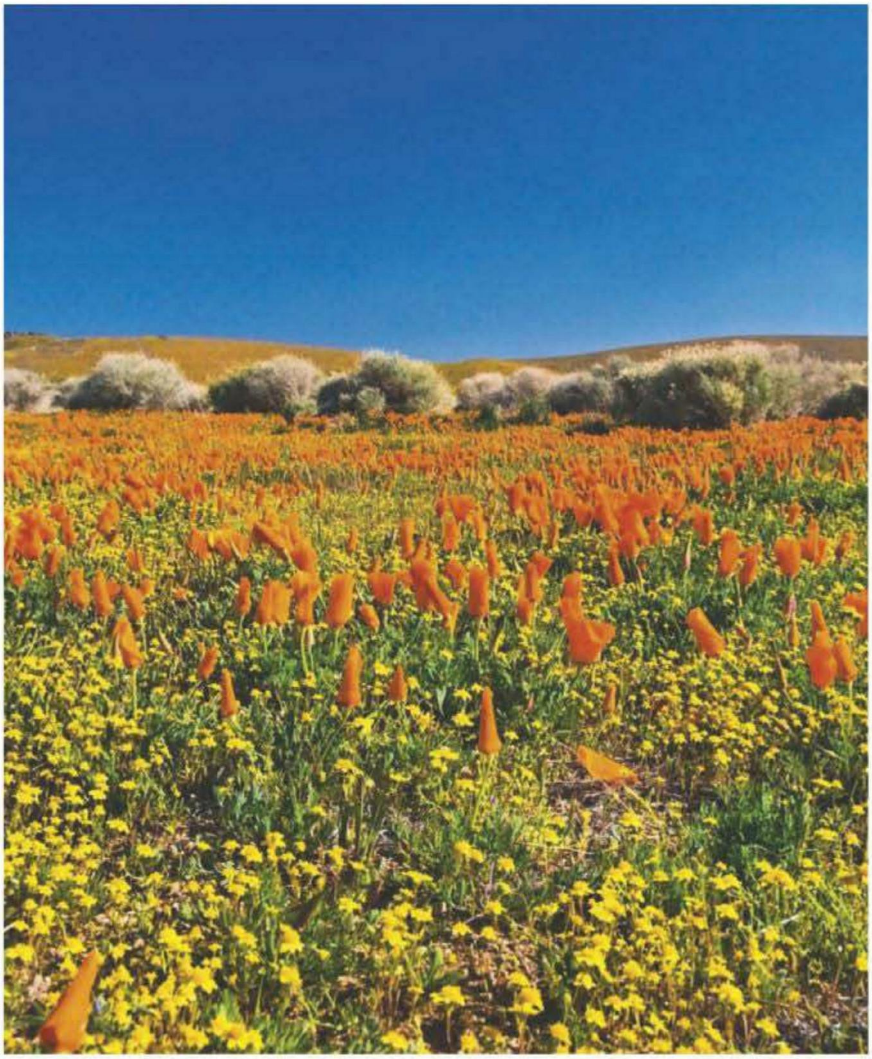
Book reviews



KINGDOM OF PLANTS

by Will Benson

Collins, £25
ISBN 978 0007463336


(C) SUPERSTOCK

Springtime at Antelope Valley Californian Poppy Reserve demonstrates flowers surviving in extreme conditions.

Accompanying a recent television series, this book spans, in nine chapters, the evolution and diversity of plant life, the scientific discovery and cataloguing of global flora and our realisation of its critical importance in sustaining life on earth. The narrative is peppered with poignant anecdotes and facts reflecting current thinking, while also celebrating the achievements of luminaries such as Sir Joseph Hooker, Charles Darwin and other historical and contemporary scientists. Also interweaved is the pivotal role of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in documenting, researching and conserving wild plants worldwide, latterly through the Millennium Seed Bank and initiatives overseas.

The opening chapter reveals the astounding breakthroughs in our understanding of how plants evolved and the devastating effects almost total extinctions had on formative life. Those few survivors evolved over millennia to create the complex ecological diversity that underpins our planetary existence. The book then moves to discuss how human society and quality of life is inextricably dependent on the consumption and use of plant-derived products, informs our understanding of mathematics, science and physics and inspires our architecture and culture. The chapter 'Power of fungi' illustrates how these cryptic organisms co-evolved with plants and are given rightful acknowledgement of the critical role they play in maintaining the equilibrium of life. The final chapter 'No plants, no humans' is a sobering warning about the perils of ignoring how our planet functions and about how we cannot mindlessly continue to exploit the natural world as a limitless resource without there being significant repercussions.

High calibre images support, but do not overwhelm the narrative. Captions are largely informative, but are occasionally too general, miss opportunities to specifically identify the plants depicted or are misleading. The caption on page 239, for example, discusses *Leucospermum conocarpodendron,* but the image is of *Protea cynaroides.* However, this does not detract from the value of the book. It is a vast story, succinctly, yet compellingly written and a treat for nature and plant lovers.

Ian Hodgson is a freelance garden writer and former editor-in-chief of the RHS journals.

book offer

RRP £25. **Reader offer price £23** including p&p.

PLANS FOR SMALL GARDENS

by Ann-Marie Powell

Pavilion, £20
ISBN 978 1862058767

PLANS
FOR
SMALL
GARDENS

An 'easy-to-handle' book broken down into a refreshing recipe format, giving specific plans and ingredient details of how to construct, build, plant and maintain ten different types of garden, ranging from Urban or Edible to Night and Minimalist.

Thoroughly practical, the author comes from an experienced background, having worked for a large trade nursery before setting up her garden design practice specialising in transforming small spaces. Young, busy, cost-conscious couples will find this book invaluable, with inspired ideas and how to follow them through from conception to construction and planting through to maintenance.

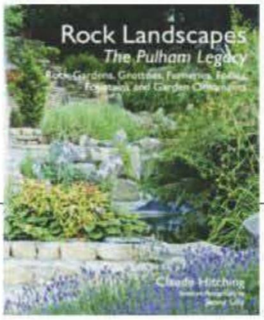
Most chapters run to about 14 pages of taking the reader through the main design elements alongside a detailed layout plan, moving on to hard landscaping (including often overlooked details such as hiring a skip). A plant list and itemised planting plan follows. A step by step method of construction and planting advice leads to a final maintenance schedule. Although none of the shown plans state scale, the final planning section at the back describes specifics such as how to build a panel fence, install an irrigation system or prepare soil for planting. Final pages cover how to draw plans and the pros and cons of employing a garden designer or landscape contractor. The list of suppliers for materials, lighting and other ingredients concentrates on southern England, while a glossary explains the technical terms of items such as geo-textile membrane and scalping in two or three lines.

All the gardens appear to have been designed by the author, with seductive and well captioned photographs by the observant garden photographer Rachel Warne. The book should appeal to new home owners while reminding less experienced professionals of the finer design and planting details so often glossed over in other 'how to do it' manuals.

Rosemary Alexander is principal and founder of the English Gardening School, and a designer and author.

book offer

RRP £20. **Reader offer price £18** including p&p.



ROCK LANDSCAPES: THE PULHAM LEGACY

by Claude Hitching

Garden Art Press, £35
ISBN 978 1870673761

In the 1760s Eleanor Coade popularised the use of artificial stone with clay-fired stoneware; half a century later James Pulham invented a new technique. Coating rubble with cement then working the surface to imitate the colour, form and texture of natural stone, his 'Pulhamite' provided a cheaper alternative in Picturesque, Italianate, Japanese, Edwardian, Alpine and Fern gardens of the day.

Capitalising on changing fashions, generations of Pulhams made garden ornaments, then catered for fauna as well by creating cave-like habitats at London's Zoo, plus 'rock' arches, bridges, tunnels and waterfalls in municipal parks.

Inspired by the discovery that five generations of his ancestors worked as Pulham 'rock builders', Claude Hitching, a retired accountant, traced the story of Pulhamite. A charming labour of love, this offers everything you could wish to know about Pulhamite – and probably much more. It lacks the focus of a scholarly study, but the photographs are superb, the research exhaustive and the gazetteer makes it invaluable for the study, restoration and maintenance of Pulhamite features in 19th to early 20th-century gardens.

Katie Campbell, senior research fellow, Institute of Humanities, Buckingham University.

book offer

RRP £35. **Reader offer price £33** including p&p.

ENGLISH COUNTRY GARDEN

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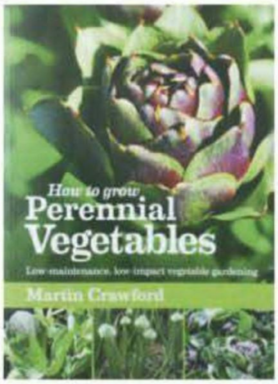
Book reviews

HOW TO GROW PERENNIAL VEGETABLES

by Martin Crawford
Green Books, £14.95
ISBN 978 1900322843



When it comes to vegetables, tradition prevails; neat rows of annuals sown and dug up each year. This book argues in favour of edible plants that survive harvesting to live on through at least three years. The science is persuasive: digging is minimised so they are less work; they improve the soil; they produce less carbon emissions and the plants are healthier to eat as they contain higher levels of mineral nutrients (thanks to bigger root systems).

The first three chapters contain extensive and extremely clear advice on planning, design, harvesting and maintenance. Helpful tables match plants to soil and light conditions and describe their functions, (ground cover, mineral accumulators and beneficial insect attractants) alongside illustrated bedding plans.

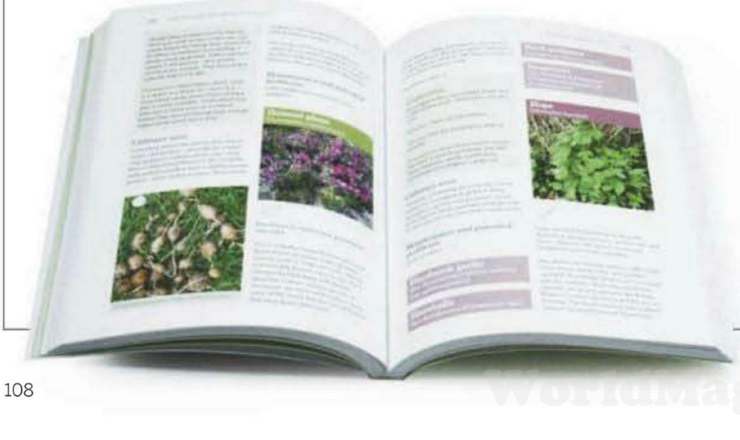
The second half of the book is an A-Z of plants. As well as cultivation and harvesting, Crawford also addresses how to cook with these unusual vegetables. Clear close-up photographs aid identification and some familiar names pop up (asparagus, rocket and cardoons) alongside ingredients not common in British kitchens such as lime leaves and mashua *(tropaeolum tuberosum)* tubers. Even if you don't decide to plant a perennial plot you could use this book to help you discover culinary uses for plants you are already growing decoratively (beech, bellflower and hosta) or how to use a pond to grow aquatic crops such as water chestnuts.

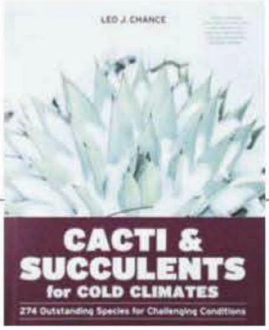
This book has much to interest sustainably minded gardeners, those who want to minimise effort and maximise return and educators (a perennial vegetable bed would be a great addition to a school garden). All gardeners can cherry-pick ideas (such as shade-tolerant perennials or planting aromatics to ward off disease). Seekers of culinary innovation will love the far-flung recipe ideas from Asia to the Andes. If you're ready to swap your carrots and parsnips for duck potatoes and skirret roots then this is the book for you.

Jojo Tulloh is author of East End Paradise: Kitchen Garden Cooking in the City.

book offer

RRP £14.95. **Reader offer price £13.95** including p&p.




LEO J. CHANCE
CACTI & SUCCULENTS for COLD CLIMATES
274 Outstanding Species for Challenging Conditions

CACTUS & SUCCULENTS FOR COLD CLIMATES

by Leo Chance
Timber Press, £25
ISBN 978 1604692648

The demand for drought-tolerant plants waxes and wanes in the UK as we swing from one meteorological extreme to another. For those wishing to experiment outdoors with the ultimate in xeric plants, here is a tidy tome with ideas from one of the USA's leading advocates of desert gardening. It brings to the fore the possibilities of gardening with a range of plants normally associated with windowsills and greenhouses and will be an eye opener for those who don't yet grasp the possibilities.

It is mainly aimed at the North American market which has a climate dissimilar to northwest Europe. However, the first chapter sets out ways of overcoming the imperfections of local climate. Chapters on cultural practices are followed by a gazetteer of cold hardy cacti and cold hardy succulents and a pleasantly extensive chapter on companion plants. The absolute minimum temperatures given in the gazetteer are irrelevant to UK gardeners, if not using some form of protection. For the experimentally minded of the USA, Continental Europe and beyond, however, this could prove inspirational.

Nick Macer founded the nursery Pan-Global Plants specialising in the rarest plants that can grow in the UK.

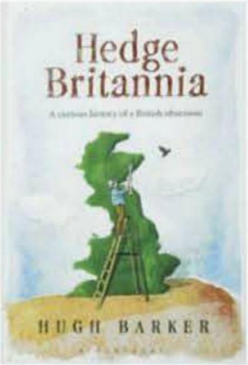
book offer

RRP £25. **Reader offer price £23** including p&p.

HEDGE BRITANNIA

by Hugh Barker

Bloomsbury, £16.99
ISBN 978 1408801864



As I was plodding my way through *Hedge Britannia,* it popped up as *Book of the Week* on Radio 4 where it was altogether more beguiling, with 15-minute packages containing the juiciest nuggets from Barker's 323 discursive pages. For there is nothing this book resembles so much as an overgrown hedge – shapeless and formless, splurging out in all directions, with odd facts enmeshed in thickets of rambling prose.

If only Barker's editor had wielded the clippers. For the thesis is an interesting one: the hedge is a kind of shorthand for our national psyche ('even and flat' on the outside, 'dark and thorny' within), and bound up with Britain's social and political development. But we must have hobbits and faeries, interminable weather reports, his footwear, his liver, even his neighbour's marriage...

The author gives a brisk overview of early agriculture and the effects of enclosure, but his garden history is shaky (Pope is airily dismissed as a fashion victim). He seems proud of the fact that he is no horticulturist, and the chapter on garden hedges is perfunctory. At least he introduces us to the Midnight Piddler, imprisoned for peeing on his neighbour's Leylandii hedge.

There are points well made about the disastrous effects of the flail on our hedgerows, and the vanishing skills of hedge layers. There is the broader observation that hedges institutionalise the inequalities of land ownership, and the reflection 'that these hedgerows, now seen as icons of rural beauty, were once widely hated for what they represented.'

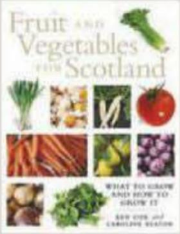
I found the photos to be rather disappointing. Your reward for perseverance with this book will be pub-quizzable facts about the role of hedges in Caesar's Gallic Wars or the British Empire in India.

Ambra Edwards is a garden writer who has a special interest in garden history.

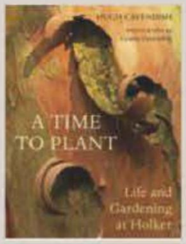
book offer

RRP £16.99. **Reader offer price £15.29** including p&p.

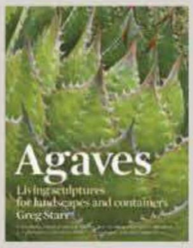
other recently released books for gardeners



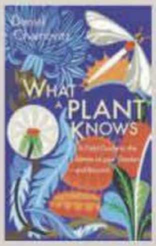
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FOR SCOTLAND
by Ken Cox and Caroline Beaton
Edibles to grow in Scotland's cool and windy climate.
Birlinn, £20
ISBN 978 1780270463



A TIME TO PLANT
by Hugh Cavendish
Reflections on 40 years of life and gardening at Holker Hall in Cumbria.
Frances Lincoln, £25
ISBN 978 0711232846



AGAVES
by Greg Starr
How to grow agaves outside their native range and which ones are best for gardens.
Timber Press, £25
ISBN 978 1604691986



WHAT A PLANT KNOWS
by Daniel Chamovitz
An intriguing and scientific – but easy to read – look at how plants experience life.
Oneworld, £12.99
ISBN 978 1851689101

book offer details

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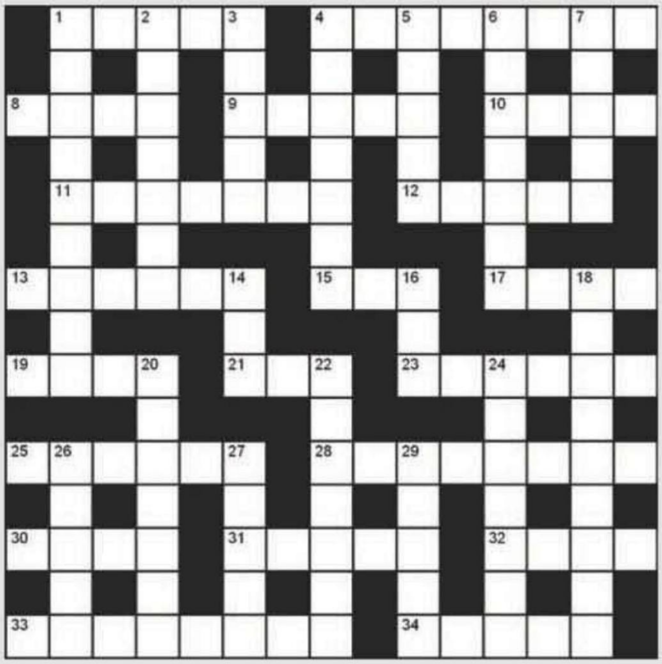
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Genus of feather-grass – hint: in South Africa initially (5)

4 Dad, right, cuts these root vegetables (8)

8 Seed case... part of *Dianthus knappii* (4)

9 Type of celery with long green stems makes an Argentinian dance! (5)

10 Slender tree shoot – initially wide rose fruit (4)

11 Style of planting featuring tall grasses, etc – at eg Olympic Park garden and Bristol's Lady Farm (7)

12 Fruit's hard seed: it's quite heavy! (5)

13 Egremont is a variety of this type of apple (6)

15/3 down Wild Michaelmas daisy – he removed from damaged heartsease (3,5)

17 __ tree is another name for *Davidia Involucrata* (emblem of peace?) (4)

19 Tree of *Pyrus* genus – a couple, it's said (4)

21 Hare's foot? Or half a papaya? (3)

23 A pale pink *Camellia japonica* to covet (6)

25 See 5 down.

28 Mark left by fallen piece of foliage (4-4)

30 At an end, hidden by foxglove roots (4)

31 Covered with *Hedera*, I took part in contest! (5)

32 Ancient Peruvian's series of *Tagetes erecta* (4)

33 Tom Stuart-Smith restored the Italian part of this Staffordshire estate gardens (8)

34 Rhubarb genus's space, it's said (5)

DOWN

1 Solid work put into Hannah Peschar's Surrey garden? (9)

2 Mushrooms of *Coprinus* genus – picks an assortment (7)

3 See 15 across

4 Shallow baskets for fruit (7)

5/16/25 across Charity founded by Linda Phillips, a green space for training young people from the inner city (5,3,6)

6 Fresh tree growth – recent type of golf club (3,4)

7 Sarah, co-designer of Olympic Park garden, has potty ideas this issue! (5)

14 & 5 down Sort a pot out for main parts of carrots (3)

16 See 5 down

18 The mullein genus, profiled this issue (9)

20 Extent of a plant's underground growth – changing on Truro (4-3)

22 Sweet, this member of *Dianthus* genus! (7)

24 Stalkless... part of glasshouse's silene (7)

26 A rose is named after this Kent castle, former Boleyn/Astor residence (5)

27 Geoffrey, one-time presenter of *Gardeners' World* (5)

29 Catkin-bearing tree in rural Derwent (5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

JUNE'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: **1** Madder **5** *Fagaceae* **9** Tobacco **10** Roller **11** Haulms **12** Bristles **13** Tarspot **15** Search **17** Carpel **19** *Monarda* **21** Catmint **22** Simple **23** *Orlaya* **24** Rosiest **25** Hare's ear **26** Leaves.

DOWN: **2** *Astrantia* **3** Dibbler **4** Rocks **5** Frogbit **6** Gerritsen **7** *Colutea* **8** Abele **14** Pollinate **16** Charlotte **18** Pottage **19** Maturer **20** *Romneya* **21** *Carya* **22** Sisal.

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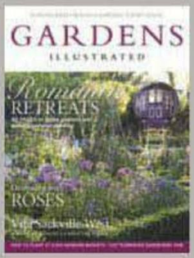

JUNE 2012
Romantic gardens and dreamy summer planting; designing with roses; stylish hanging baskets; Vita Sackville-West; astrantias; Dan Pearson's top summer shrubs.

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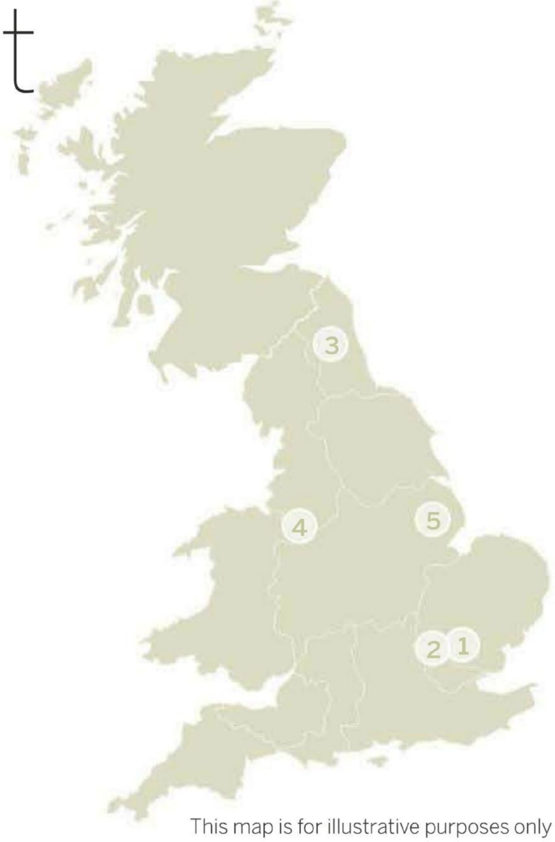

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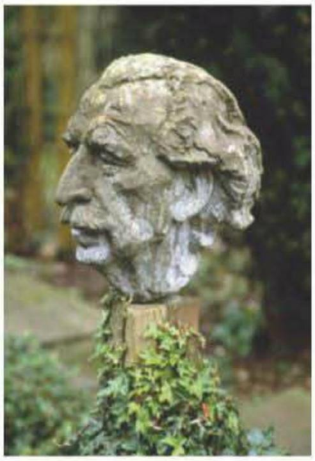
1. THE GIBBERD GARDEN TRUST

On the outskirts of Harlow, Essex, there is a garden full of beauty, peace and tranquillity. It is a wonderful place to stroll and be inspired – every turn reveals another aspect, or work of art, for this garden was created by Sir Frederick Gibberd, the masterplanner of Harlow new town. He designed his garden and filled the grounds with sculptures, ceramic pots and architectural salvage from 1957 until his death in 1984. This magical place has rightly been described as 'one of the few outstanding examples of 20th-century garden design.' It is open to the public from 2 to 6 pm, on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays during the season.

WEBSITE **www.thegibberdgarden.co.uk**
TEL **01279 442112**



2. THE GROVE – EXPRESIONS OF MOVEMENT

The Grove, Hertfordshire. Inspired by events of 2012; such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics, 57 works have been spread throughout The Grove's formal hotel gardens. Visitors may enjoy the sculpture as part of a weekend or mid-week break at The Grove, a pre-dinner walk in the grounds or whilse enjoying a delicious afternoon tea.

Now open until 30 September. All works are for sale. For full descriptions and prices visit www.thegrove.co.uk/sculpture

WEBSITE **www.thegrove.co.uk**
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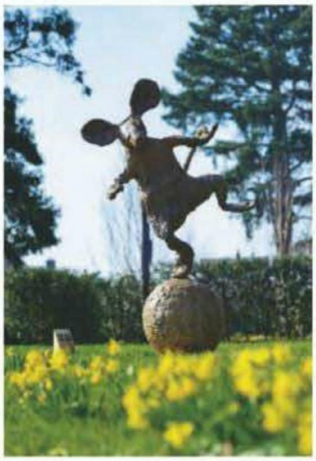


3. KIELDER WATER & FOREST PARK DEVELOPMENT

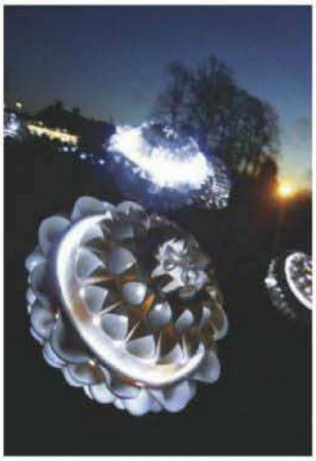
Kielder Water & Forest Park in Northumerland is home to the largest open-air art and architecture gallery in the country. A unique collection of 20 contemporary pieces is available to visit in a striking rural setting. Find out more at www.visitkielder.com.

WEBSITE **www.visitkielder.com**
TEL **01434 220616**

4. MOUNT PLEASANT GARDENS

Mount Pleasant Gardens are a stunning ten-acre gardens set in the heart of the Cheshire countryside, with sculpture on display throughout the year and hundreds more in the September sculpture exhibition, when over 20 artists work will be exhibited. Stone carving courses are held throughout the year.

WEBSITE **www.mountpleasantgardens.co.uk**
TEL **01829 751592** EMAIL **louisedarlington@btinternet.com**



5. DODDINGTON HALL AND GARDENS

See the fine outdoor exhibition of sculpture at Doddington Hall and Gardens this year. Over 275 pieces from 70 National and International Sculptors from Saturday 4 August to Sunday 2 September. Carefully selected works will be in all mediums, from bronze to aluminium, ceramics to wood, marble to stone, wind and kinetic pieces, to water and glass. The works have been chosen to surprise, delight and enhance the already beautiful array of gardens. Enjoy the fabulous farm shop, café and restaurant and India Jane interiors. Exhibition sponsored by Brewin Dolphin.

WEBSITE **www.doddingtonhall.com/Sculpture**
TEL **01522 812510**

6. MAUNDY TODD SCULPTURE GARDEN AND GALLERY

Inspiring sculpture garden and indoor gallery in south west London. Award-winning sculptors' iconic works alongside contemporary pieces by young artists. Wander through our summer garden with a glass of wine. Something for everybody's taste and budget. Open by Appointment on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays during the season. Current show includes, Adam Aaronsen, Michelle Castles, Peter M Clarke, Paul Cox, Carolyn Genders, Veda Hallowes, Sarah Hayhoe, Stephen Henderson, Chris Lewis, Antonio Lopez Reche, Juliet Scott, Chris Lewis, Rick Kirby, Helen Sinclair, Tom Stogdon, Nikki Taylor, Julia Webster and Max Woodruff.

WEBSITE **www.maundytodd.com**
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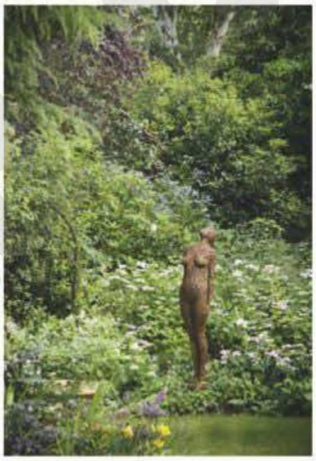

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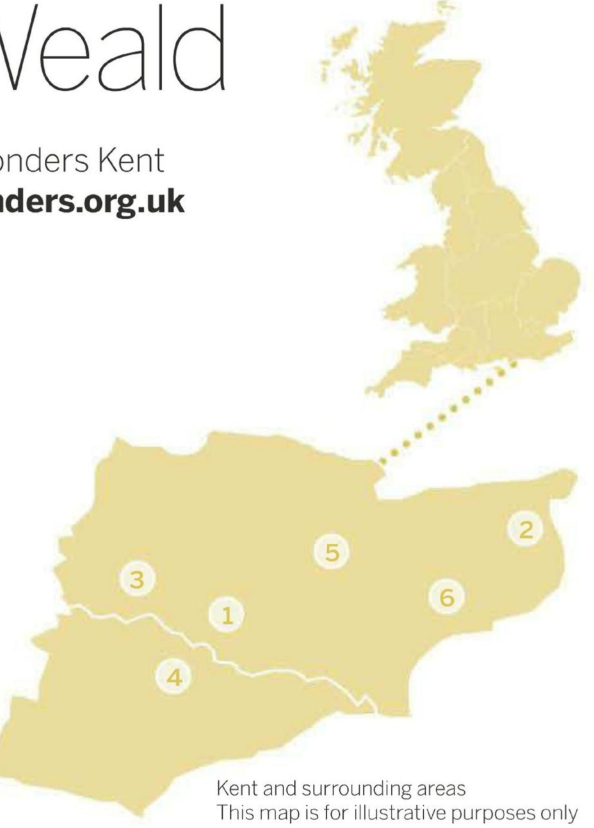

Kent and surrounding areas
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1. MARLE PLACE GARDENS AND GALLERY

A haven for admirers of art, wildlife and plants, these gold award-winning, privately owned gardens and grounds, range from hedged formality to natural woodlands. Contemporary art exhibitions in gallery, light refreshments in the cartbay. July's colourful, crowded, scented borders and old fashioned roses delight the onlooker and butterflies alike. Visit us: Marle Place Garden and Gallery, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Kent TN12 7HS.

WEBSITE **www.marleplace.co.uk**
TEL **01892 722304** EMAIL **lindelwilliams@googlemail.com**

2. THE SECRET GARDENS OF SANDWICH

The Secret Gardens of Sandwich are a fine example of a Lutyens-Jekyll country garden and have rightly been dubbed 'flower heaven' by many visitors. The garden has been split into different 'rooms', each with unique planting styles. Discover tropical flowers, wild meadows, a picturesque lake and a rather stunning woodland walk on your visit.

WEBSITE **www.the-secretgardens.co.uk**
TEL **01304 619919** EMAIL **dominic@the-salutation.com**

3. HEVER CASTLE

Romantic 13th-century, double-moated castle, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, set in the heart of the Kent countryside. Explore the quintessential English garden with glorious formal and natural landscape including topiary, walled rose garden, magnificent classical statuary, fountains, grottoes, lake, yew and water mazes, shops and restaurants.

WEBSITE **www.hevercastle.co.uk**
TEL **01732 865224** EMAIL **mail@hevercastle.co.uk**

4. MERRIMENTS GARDENS

Merriments Gardens is the garden to visit in 2012. Four acres of imaginative planting, deep, sinuously curved borders, pulsating with colour and texture marry with open spaces, two ponds, a bog garden and wild area to provide a breathtaking experience that brings many of our visitors back time and time again.

WEBSITE **www.merriments.co.uk**
TEL **01580 860666** EMAIL **info@merriments.co.uk**

5. LEEDS CASTLE

Leeds Castle in Kent combines 900 years of history and 500 acres of beautiful parkland. The Wood Garden offers a mass of spring bulbs and wild flowers, fragrant herbs and roses in abundance in the quintessentially English Culpeper Garden and late flowering borders in the drought-resistant Mediterranean Lady Baillie Garden.

WEBSITE **www.leeds-castle.com**
TEL **01622 765400** EMAIL **enquiries@leeds-castle.co.uk**

6. JACKSON FINE FENCING

WEBSITE **www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk** TEL **01233 750393**

Chelsea Flower Show may be fading from your memory, but Jacksons Show Gardens are still here to inspire you… Now into the third year the Show Gardens at the Kent Fencing company's display area have proved to be an attraction for visitors, as news has got around about these inspirational displays. In the first year the project was hailed as a 'mini Chelsea Flower Show' as people in the Kent area were treated to visions of loveliness more associated with the big RHS flower shows, rather than something you would expect to see in a local fencing centre.

Two of the seven existing gardens on show at Stowting have been replaced with brand new designs; these are this year's winners. Entrants come from all over the country and even the Continent.

"We wanted to create more than just a fencing display. By running the national competition for garden designers to create show gardens that use Jacksons and other high quality suppliers' products, we have provided something for people to visit to get inspiration for their own garden projects. What's more, the gardens are available for people to visit all year round, rather than the few days that show gardens can be seen at the large flower shows. I am really excited about the two new gardens this year, as in the previous years, the quality of the entries we had made it very difficult to choose the winners, but we got there and now they are open and ready for visitors." *Says Louise Tomlin at Jacksons.*

The winners are: Natural Reflections by Alison Coxhead and Within the Weave by Kari Beardsell. Alison, a local Kent designer revealed that she did not need any encouragement to include Jacksons' products within her design. "I use them all the time and even have them in my own garden," she explained. "I try to persuade my customers to include Jacksons' fencing, gates and other garden products because using cheaper, inferior products is a mistake in the long run.

"It's important to me that the gardens I have designed stay looking good, which means my clients will enjoy them for years to come. By specifying quality products I know that they will still be looking good 25 years plus later – and that means my work is still going to be looking good, too."

Featuring in the new gardens will be the amazing new Woven fence panel by Jacksons, there is a clue is in the name of Kari Beardsell's 'Within the Weave'. The woven panels are catching on fast and have been an instant success with almost everyone who has seen them.

The gardens are open to visitors at Jacksons HQ in Stowting during the company's usual opening hours.

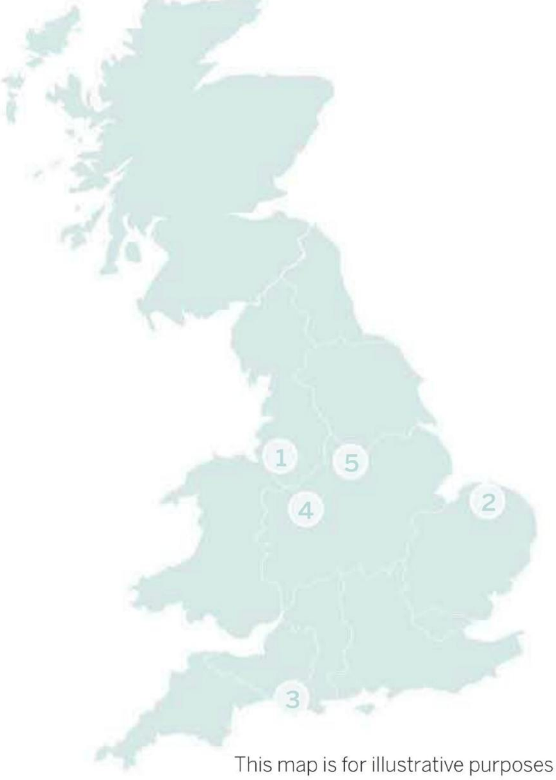
Gardens to Visit

Enjoy this bounty of wonderful gardens to visit over the spectacular Summer months

1. ABBEYWOOD GARDENS

An exciting all-season garden in the heart of Cheshire. Long flowering, naturalistically planted herbaceous borders in the main gardens. Exciting and vibrantly planted Christopher Lloyd-inspired exotic garden. Rare and unusual woodland plants in Jane's garden. A young arboretum with interesting evergreen and deciduous trees. 17 miles southwest on the A556 from RHS Tatton Show. The cafe serves a delicious seasonal menu.

WEBSITE **www.abbeywoodgardenscheshire.co.uk**
TEL **01606 301374** EMAIL **abbeywood.gardens@gmail.com**



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2. PENSTHORPE WILDLIFE AND GARDENS

From the structural beauty of the Millennium Garden to the lush foliage in the Wave Garden, the habitat-specific Wildlife Habitat Garden and the subtle, traditionally managed flood plain of the Wildflower Meadow, Pensthorpe's stunning gardens provide year-round colour and interest. New sculpture and planting in our extended Wave Garden is now open.

WEBSITE **www.pensthorpe.com**
TEL **01328 851465** EMAIL **info@pensthorpe.com**

3. ABBOTSBURY SUBTROPICAL GARDENS

Winner
HHA/Christie's
Garden of the Year
Award
2012

Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens in Dorset are considered one of the best in the UK. Winner of HHA/ Christie's Garden of the year Award 2012, described by Alan Titchmarsh as "one of the finest gardens I have ever visited". A gem on the World Heritage Coast open from 10am daily, free parking. Bullers Way, Abbotsbury, Dorset, DT3 4LA.

WEBSITE **www.abbotsburygardens.co.uk**
TEL **01305 871387**

4. TRENTHAM GARDENS

Winners of the 2010 European Award for Historic Garden Restoration. Vast perennial plantings by renowned designers Tom Stuart-Smith and Piet Oudolf present breathtaking vistas this summer. Enjoy the Italian Garden, mile-long lake, show gardens, adventure playground, woodland walks and tearoom with stunning panoramic views. Adjacent is an impressive shopping village. Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8JG.

WEBSITE **www.trentham.co.uk**
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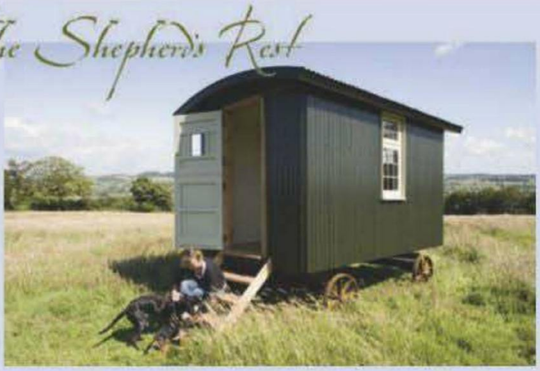

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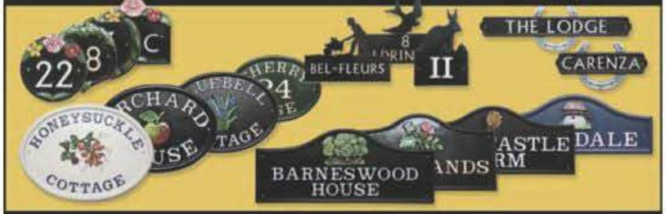

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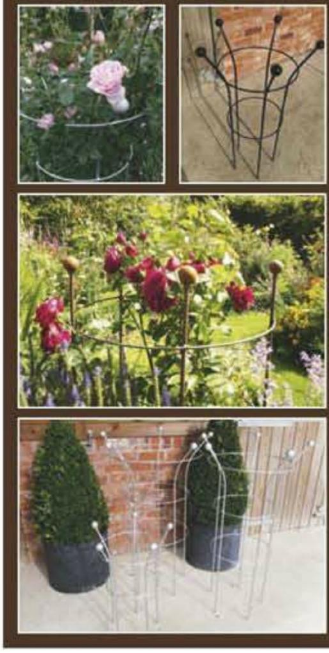

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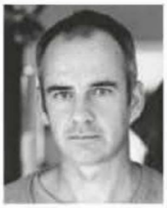
IMAGE TAKEN FROM PLANS FOR SMALL GARDENS BY ANN-MARIE POWELL, PUBLISHED BY PAVILION. PHOTOGRAPHY BY RACHEL WARNE

Short back and sides

Our columnist dedicates several tortuous but happy hours to grooming clumps of tired plants

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

If just one libertia, long past flowering, is standing on a corner looking shabby it will catch your eye more often than any showy delight. An idling plant needs to be unobtrusive, but libertias have a tendency to cling to redundant blades until the brown outnumber the green. The theory is that you then throw it out and let one of the self-sown progeny take the limelight. My problem is that I have never seen a libertia seedling here (inevitably, several will appear and be pointed out to me the moment that statement hits the printing press) so it is the old ones or nothing.

The leaves won't pull easily as do the leaves of a dierama. Even with dieramas enthusiasm can get the better of you and there will suddenly be a healthy fan dangling from what you had assumed was a clump of death. Nor can the whole plant be hogged in early spring, as you might with Siberian irises, because that will do nothing to clear congestion at the base to make way for new growth. The solution is what can best be described as grooming. As an annual ritual it will be less strenuous and take less time than the daily rituals required by a moderately turned-out horse. There is the bonus that the plant will not undo your work by rolling in filth when your back is turned.

Happily I am one of those obsessive compulsive types who likes nothing better than half a sunny morning spent sitting on the path, smallest secateurs in hand, tracing each of a multitude of dead leaves back to the point of origin and snipping it out. It requires a certain amount of concentration but not so much that you can't pretend to be listening to someone who wants to talk to you. Every action makes the plant a little better and you can almost feel it breathe more easily as you comb handfuls of leaf mould from the depths. At moments you worry that not enough plant will remain by the end of the process, but as yet more detritus comes away you begin to see all the nascent replacements that were only waiting for a little space to encourage them.

Such is the improvement, by the end, that you wish you had done it in April, thinking how much better the flowers would have looked rising from clean foliage. But there are usually more pressing tasks in April than mere grooming and you could not have had the same pleasure then were you indulging yourself on a warm path while chitted potatoes shriveled at the back of your conscience. Such is the addictive nature of grooming that you begin to look around for other, less obvious, plants in need of improvement.

Angela Harding

"Every action makes the plant a little better and you can almost feel it breathe more easily"

My absolute favourite grass is *Chionochloa rubra*. The species name *rubra* is misleading as it is not particularly red. The joy of it is that every cylindrical blade is a subtly different shade of rust, bronze, green, verdigris and brown in a ridiculously effusive fountain, shown to best effect when grown by itself in an enormous pot. This winter, when we had that strange bout of freezing rain, it became a complete wonder, with each blade encased in a perfect cylinder of clear ice. By spring I noticed that the poor thing was not quite itself. The ice had taken its toll and there was a lot of monotonous brown where there should have been a shimmering array of colour. Grooming was called for.

The method here was to thrust my fingers deep and draw them back with clawfuls of dead stuff, over and over until all that remained was firm and alive. Despite the sharp surprises of occasional trapped holly leaves, it was the most soothing and satisfying of tasks, and took me back to my horse days, when we considered pulled tails rather common and combs destructive, and had to gently unknot the tails hair by separate hair for hours on end and call it work. □

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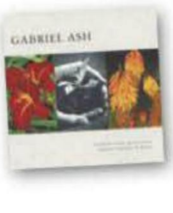
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